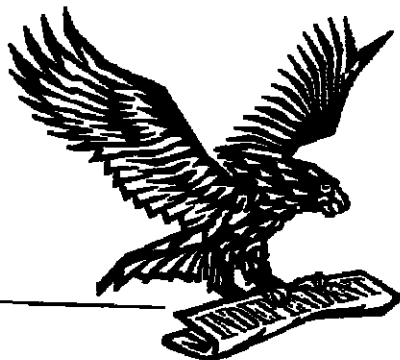


Rupert Cornwell
on them rambling
Republicans

page 15



Euro '96 and
the barmy army
invasion

Section Two, cover story

Move over
Marco, home
cooking is back

Section Two, living

The night
I met Lonnie
Donegan

John Walsh, section two

THE INDEPENDENT

2,993

THURSDAY 23 MAY 1996

WEATHER Dry in the north, wet in the south 40p (IR 45p)

Oh what a lovely war!



JOHN LICHFIELD

There they go, there they go, there they go... Over the channel, and through the Tunnel, pour the massed battalions of the British Euro-sceptic Expeditionary Force (BEEF). Over the coming weeks, they will fight them in the committee rooms, in the council chambers, in the summits, in the newspaper columns. If the beef ban should last for a thousand years, they will never surrender. If they're forced into another Dunkirk-withdrawal from Europe - they would not care.

But hold on a moment, the derided Euro-pacifist cries: is not this a very silly war?

For Britain is fighting, in effect, on the side of Euro-federalism and Big Brother Europe against legitimate national anxieties. We are bombarding our allies as well as our opponents. We are within an

inch or two of achieving our first objective peacefully.

We are deploying weapons which, if they damage anything at all, damage ourselves as much as they damage the enemy.

The Mad Cow War of 1996 will be portrayed as the usual thing: Britain versus a threatening and monolithic Europe. But this time it is different. Consider the following remarkable statement by the Foreign Secretary, Malcolm Rifkind, speaking to Sky Television yesterday: "The European Commission has said that [the easing of the beef ban] is the right thing to do. A small group of countries is blocking all progress for their own internal political reasons." How shocking. Mr Rifkind implies, and how short-sighted, that a group of countries should put their own national interests and the concerns of their public before the expressed and su-

gust view of the European Commission...

So much, then, for the views of the German, Belgian, Dutch, Luxembourgish, Italian, Spanish and Portuguese people. They should they bow to the will of Brussels and the Euro-majority. If the situation were reversed, and the BSE epidemic had occurred in, say, France, a child could compose the likely *Daily Mail* splash headline: "EU orders Britons to eat killer meat!"

There are two reasons why this wholly unnecessary crisis may cause far more damage to Britain's relations with Europe than any of Mrs Thatcher's protracted constitutional and budgetary crusades of the 1980s - which, arguably, were necessary. First, the dispute is driven on the British side by some genuine concern for fair play and anxiety about the livelihoods of

British beef farmers. We do have a case, although the Government has presented it badly. But the real long-term interest of our farmers is to restore the reputation of British beef. This cannot be done by shouting: "Eat our beef or else". The whole affair has been hijacked by Euro-hysteria. It has been turbo-charged into a crisis by the opportunism of a minority of Conservative politicians and a majority of Euro-bashing British newspapers.

Secondly, on the European side, the dispute is fuelled not by devious political machinations but by the life-and-death fears, however misplaced, of real people. Mad cows are no abstract Euro-squabble. BSE is one of those rare EU issues which people know about and care passionately about.

In terms of strict veterinary science and European law, the

British Government and the European Commission may well be right. There is no clear scientific reason not to eat British beef. EU countries should certainly ease the export ban to allow trade in gelatin, tallow, semen and, possibly, organically reared beef.

But a large section of consumer opinion on the continent believes that eating British beef - eating any beef - might (just might) rot the brains of their children and condemn them to a horrible early death. And who, originally, said so? The British Government and the British press.

The result is demonstrated by beef sales, which have fallen in Germany by 45 per cent, in France by 25 per cent, in Spain by 40 per cent, in Italy by 60 per cent. In Britain sales have returned to 94 per cent of last year's levels.

Given the absence of British

beef from the continental market, and the rarity of BSE on the continent, the Euro-consumers' fears are irrational. But they exist. Britain says Germany and the others should be doing more to educate their public. They say we should do more to convince consumers that we are eradicating BSE.

This is, then, a typical Grade One Euro-squabble in which the technical and political arguments have become so hopelessly intertwined that any solution is too technical for the politicians and too political for the technocrats.

Yet given minimal goodwill, and a little time, there would have been a compromise. Why? Because that is what Brussels is good at.

It may still happen. But meanwhile, the British policy of non-cooperation will not paralyse Europe. A large part of normal EU business can be

conducted by majority vote. No-one was expecting early progress in the rolling inter-governmental Conference (IGC) on EU reform. Mr Major can make a nuisance of himself at the Florence summit next month but the 14 will probably draw up their own declaration, leaving the British Prime Minister as a footnote.

The truth is that we can draw a little blood, but some will be our own. One of the early targets for British obstruction is an obscure protocol on solvency in EU company law. This is something we can block. Triumph! Unfortunately, it is also something that the Government ap-

proves of, and British industry has long wanted.

We are facing a prolonged stalemate. We will soon have demands for more aggressive and probably illegal anti-EU offensives. The main effect will be to inflame anti-European feeling ahead of the election. What that will do to the Poor Bloody Infantry of British commerce remains to be seen. Today, General Major is a hero. But it is all slightly reminiscent of Siegfried Sassoon's poem: "He's a cheery old card, grunted Harry to Jack... But he did for them both with his plan of attack." Blocking the EU, page 2

Science and politics, page 20

Owen Oyston, the rapist



"You were 58. She was 16. You were rich and powerful with a strong personality. She was young and vulnerable."

- Mr Justice McCullough speaking last night.
Full report, page 3

Jaymee and final choices: The story behind the story

By Polly Toynbee

A year of happy, hopeful life for an 11-year-old - what is it worth? It is priceless, of course, in a realm beyond financial reckoning. To the child herself, it was all there was.

Jaymee Bowen - Child B of the celebrated "health rationing" case - died on Tuesday night, as most of the leading cancer experts knew she must. She lived longer than many predicted but the ending was virtually certain. Her beaming face and extraordinary hopefulness were almost unbearable to watch for those who knew that hope was an illusion. But she had her extra year.

Controversy about the issues in her case will live on for as long as dying patients press for expensive, untried treatments against the rigid confines of NHS budgets. This was Jaymee's story: fighting leukaemia half of her life, at 10 years old she reached the end of the line after a bone marrow transplant failed. Her doctors said that there was no hope and further treatment might only prolong suffering.

But her father refused to accept it and demanded a second bone marrow transplant. The health authority, Cambridge and Huntingdon, refused because of the pain involved, no-one in her condition had ever survived it and the best experts at the Royal Marsden hospital gave the same second opinion. (The health authority always said they would have paid for

'I'd rather have gone through more suffering to live than not go through anything and die'

- Jaymee Bowen, page 5

force the health authority to pay, a private benefactor stepped forward and Gravett told a press conference the treatment would go ahead.

In fact, Jaymee never received the disputed second transplant. When Gravett looked again at the stark facts, he retreated. Instead he gave her more chemotherapy which put her into remission - treatment her original hospital might have offered had Jaymee's fam-

ily pushed for it. Gravett then gave her an experimental treatment in early trial stages - donor lymphocyte infusion - infusing white blood cells from her sister. It had never been tried on a child and it could have stripped the skin from her whole body. Jaymee's health authority was never asked to foot the bill for this treatment.

And so she lived for another year to thumb her nose at the

health authority. But since she was not part of a controlled trial, no one will ever know if her treatment gave her the extra year. It might have been just the chemotherapy.

This, then, is not a nice neat moral dilemma: should the health authority have paid £75,000 to buy Jaymee a year of life? They were never offered anything that looked like that proposition. Like most health dilemmas, it is murky.



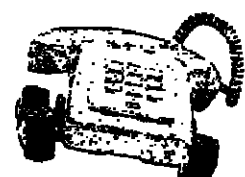
Virtually all leading child cancer experts belong to the UK Children's Cancer Study Group, pooling research on new treatments. Their chairman, Professor Clifford Bailey, says that were he faced with Jaymee's case again, he would give the same advice - not to treat her. He says the very early stages of the trials of donor lymphocyte infusion look as if it will not be a treatment in itself, but it may enhance the chances of bone marrow transplant success in 15 per cent of patients.

Britain leads in child leukaemia treatment partly because all research is highly co-ordinated. Professor Bailey says if health authorities give in to patient pressure and fund untried, expensive treatments outside official trials, trials would be wrecked in popular stampedes with no clear outcomes.

To any parent of a dying child that is a dry and deathly answer. Of course they will clutch at any straw from apricot stones and carrots to the now discredited rush for interferon for bone cancer. The burden will always fall upon health authorities to make the choice, but what more can they do but rely on the overwhelming medical opinion of the day?

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2
news

Portable numbers dial the future

MATHEW HORSMAN
Media Editor

In what the telecoms industry calls a "world first", BT customers in Derby will be able to switch to a cheaper phone service without changing their telephone number.

Nynex CableComms, the country's second-largest cable operator, launched "number portability" in its Derby franchise yesterday, and said it would extend the option to other franchise areas in coming

months. Customers elsewhere in the country will soon be able to make the same choice, as other cable operators introduce their own schemes.

Number portability has been one of the most contentious issues in the long-running campaign by Ofcom to increase competition in the UK telecoms market.

Don Cruickshank, the director-general of the industry's regulator, Ofcom, vowed to continue to push for a broader introduction of the scheme

throughout the country, working BT and its main competitors.

He said the ultimate goal was to have a single number that follows customers everywhere, and that could be used for fixed and mobile communications. But he and industry analysts agree that the prospect is still several years off, due to complex technical challenges.

Initially, portability will be available only within cable franchise areas and phone numbers cannot be kept if customers

move to another region. The service will cost £20 for residential customers and £40 for businesses.

Nynex intends to roll out portability to its other franchise areas, including Stoke and areas of the South, by August. Telewest, the country's largest cable operator, said yesterday it would move quickly to introduce the option in its own franchise areas.

Independent studies have shown that customers – particularly small business – are

resistant to switching to a non-BT supplier if it means giving up their own phone number.

"Businesses worry about the costs of replacing stationery, business cards and so on," said a spokesman for Nynex. "Our studies also show reluctance on the part of higher income customers, for whom price is not the only issue."

BT agreed to portability only following a ruling by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission, which suggested guidelines over how the costs of

switching would be met. Consistent with the MMC proposals, the company releasing a phone number would bear about 70 per cent of the costs, with the new service provider covering the remaining 30 per cent.

The cable industry has long viewed lack of portability as one of the most important restraints on its growth in the UK. Once the option is more widely available, it is expected to give a boost to penetration rates for cable telephony.

Confusion in Brussels: But British ministers insist they aren't 'at war' as disruption starts

British begin to block and stall EU

SARAH HELM
Brussels
and JOHN RENTOU

Amid confusion in Brussels, Britain yesterday began its campaign to disrupt EU business in retaliation for the beef ban, by blocking a convention on insolvency, and warning of further use of the veto.

The Government yesterday warned its European Union partners that Britain "will not be pushed around", as John Major set up a crisis Cabinet to oversee its policy of non-cooperation to secure a lifting of the ban. But Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary, and Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, both rejected suggestions that Britain was "at war" with other EU countries.

David Bostock, the UK's deputy permanent representative to the EU, read out passages of the Prime Minister's statement at a meeting of senior officials, in order to reaffirm the Government's serious intent. The statement was greeted in silence by the representatives of other member states.

Mr Rifkind said: "We didn't expect the Prime Minister's announcement to be welcomed by other countries... but we are not going to be pushed around and that concentrates the mind wonderfully."

He spoke after Mr Major moved to set up a three-man "core group" of the Cabinet to oversee the strategy of non-cooperation with the European Union. The committee consists of the Prime Minister, the Foreign Secretary and Douglas Hogg, the Minister of Agriculture. Mr Rifkind said: "We have a serious disagreement with a number of countries. The



Burning issue: A carcass on its way to the furnace at a Ministry of Agriculture-registered crematorium near Cambridge

Photograph: Brian Harris

proper way to resolve it is by dialogue and negotiation."

A Downing Street spokesman said the "core group" was planning a series of ministerial visits to European capitals to press Britain's case for a lifting of the ban.

A second committee, chaired by the public services minister, Roger Freeman, will be charged with overseeing "domestic action" – ensuring that the slaughter programme and anti-BSE measures are enforced.

As Conservative Euro-sceptics continued to celebrate what they perceived as a partial victory, Tory divisions remained on display, with Mr Clarke – whose

support for the obstruction of EU business was critical – adopting a glaringly different tone from Tory Central Office.

He denied that the strategy of disruption was designed to present the Tory party in a jingoistic way in the run-up to the election. "We are not wrapping ourselves in the Union Jack. The Conservative Party is patriotic but it is not nationalist."

Attention will now focus on positions taken by Britain in a number of key Brussels meetings planned for the next few days, on foreign trade policy, civil protection and the single market.

British interests are strongly affected by the EU's foreign

trade decisions, and the Government is expected to resist serious disruption in this field.

Despite the clear signs that a policy of non-cooperation is now in force, British officials continued to attend a series of important meetings in Brussels, including talks in the inter-governmental conference, on long-term EU reform.

The European Commission, meanwhile, cleared a new hurdle on the way to easing the beef ban, by agreeing that its proposal for ending the ban on gelatin, tallow and semen, would be re-submitted to a special council of agriculture ministers on 3 June. It was re-

jection of the same proposals before the standing veterinary committee on Monday that provoked the Government's retaliatory action.

If the agriculture council fails to take a clear decision on the proposal, it will be sent back to the European Commission, which will then be obliged, under EU rules to order its implementation. There will be heavy lobbying in the run-up to the meeting to ensure that such an outcome is avoided, as the commission could be accused of taking an undemocratic decision, which runs counter to the feelings of some member states.

Commission officials, who called for calm, continued to play down the seriousness of Mr Major's threats, questioning whether Britain would ultimately take any significant disruptive measures. It was noted as significant that the Government had held back from ordering any trade sanctions, and had not carried out an earlier threat to call a special EU summit to discuss the crisis.

However, several of Britain's partners expressed new alarm at the Government's stance after examining the details of Mr Major's statement. Lamberto Dini, the Italian foreign minister, spoke of "strong-arm tactics" and "blackmail".

Help! Send for the Mongolians

Wednesday, on the last day before the Whit recess, and the Chamber showed few signs of previous afternoon's excitement. The lingering indications of agitated Tory bottoms could just be spotted on the green benches. But where were the order papers that had been so bravely waved just 24 hours earlier? Where the echoes of the martial songs sung to celebrate a warrior nation's rediscovery of itself? Was this bare dispatch box really the place where that historic statement had been read to an impatient country?

All gone now. Dispersed to committees and party offices, to constituency business and speeches to the YCs, to boroughs and hamlets – charged with preparing the British people for the struggle ahead. The Muster of England has begun. Well, nearly all gone. A small few had duties still to perform



DAVID AARONOVITCH

in the House. And one such was William Powell, Conservative member for Corby, and chairman of the British-Mongolian Parliamentary Group. He was there to tell Jeremy Hanley (minister at the Foreign Office), a whip, me, the reporters from Hansard and three Mongolians in the public gallery, all about the burgeoning alliance between London and Ulan Bator.

Mr Powell's speech was in the best tradition of pre-war church hall slide-shows (William Brown, as I recall, was always

subverting such occasions, substituting stills of saucy Parisian postcards for pictures of African children finding God). A missionary-like figure himself, speaking in vicarious tones, Mr Powell has also in his time served on groups liaising with Malta, Singapore, The Gulf, Sri Lanka, Italy, Taiwan and (most loathsome of all) Mauritius. Where other more parochial MPs have limited themselves to commuting between Westminster office and constituency office, gradually coming to regard a night out at a Berni Inn as exotic, Mr Powell has served his country by continually leaving it. And his sacrifice has not been wasted.

He started well. "Mongolia is not a faraway country of which we know nothing," he averred. So I tested myself. Could I name a country which was further away and of which I knew less? I failed. But that was exactly

what Mr Powell was pledged to put right. As he did so he waxed poetic. "As we speak, darkness is descending over Ulan Bator, but it can be reached within 24 hours by air-transport." True, but so can the moon.

"To speak physically, there are very few clouds. The sun shines. The sky is blue." Kublai helps Mummy cut up the yak. "To the north lie the Arctic wastes of Siberia; to the south the Gobi desert; to the east the Great Wall of China; to the west the romance and mystery of Samarkand and Tashkent." But it had only the population of Birmingham.

Then the peroration. Mongolia made great vodka, terrific cashmere, well-educated children (so the comparison with Birmingham ends there), and could do with advice on agricultural matters (where we are the obvious choice). Mr Powell had been there recently, and he "went in friendship" and was received in "friendship". Finished, he packed his slides away and sat down.

This was news that Mr Hanley must have been grateful to hear. After all, we are not making a great fist out of our other alliances at the moment – so we may soon need the Mongolians. Indeed, the last time that they were over here in any numbers (in the middle of the thirteenth century) they made quite an impact.

Within 24 hours of our call, using "air transport", they could come riding to our rescue, their womenfolk trundling behind them in motorised yurts. Helmut Kohl's head hanging by its sparse hairs from their leader's saddle-bow. "Take us to Genghis Major," they will demand, "so that we may pay homage to a real warrior."

Trimble issues tough warning over support

DONALD MACINTYRE
Political Editor

David Trimble, leader of the Ulster Unionist Party, yesterday staked out his ground ahead of planned all-party talks on Northern Ireland with his sharpest warning that he could yet be prepared to see the Government fall.

The UUP leader warned that John Major's Government "need not look to us for support" if it started to backslide on the key issue of requiring IRA weapons to be decommissioned as the talks, due to start on 10 June, progressed.

The warning came amid Unionist fears that the separation of the planned talks into different strands, as sought by the Irish government, will break any link between the progress of political talks and the handling of republican weapons.

Mr Trimble strongly denied on the BBC Radio 4 programme *Today* that he was

adopting a hardline posture in advance of Northern Ireland elections to a peace forum, which will precede the talks.

He said his threat on Tuesday to pull down the Government if it broke undertakings over the ceasefire and decommissioning had been "serious".

He said: "What we have detected in the past few days are signs of a familiar old Irish stitch-up. We've been here regularly in the last 10 years where secret deals done between No 10 and the Irish government are imposed upon us. This is happening not just, we feel, with regard to the details of the talks. We see it happening again and we're blowing the whistle."

His remarks came as Dick Spring, the Irish Foreign Minister and Sir Patrick Mayhew, the Northern Ireland Secretary, prepared yesterday to meet in London to try and make progress on the format or the talks.

Mr Trimble warned that the UUP would "not support an administration that is doing serious damage to the United Kingdom". He added: "What we must do is to make it absolutely clear to the terrorists that terrorism will not work."

Meanwhile, Robert McCartney, the Independent UK Unionist MP for North Down, who had an 80-minute meeting with Mr Major yesterday, said that the Prime Minister now knew that he was "dealing with a professional team of negotiators who know their business."



Trimble: Blowing the whistle on a good old Irish stitch-up

SIGNIFICANT SHORTS

Strike action may hit the Euro '96 football championship after the train drivers' union ASLEF yesterday called for a ballot on 24-hour stoppages in protest at a 2.7 per cent pay offer to its London Underground staff.

The union's executive said the first threatened walk-out is on 26 June, the date of the semi-final when tens of thousands of fans will be travelling to Wembley for the game. ASLEF said the company was attaching unacceptable strings to its offer in order to finish a one-hour reduction in the working week to 36.5 hours. ASLEF said London Underground was only prepared to 1.9 per cent if there were no concessions.

Noting for a series of one-day walkouts among the union's 2,000 members at London Underground will end on 19 June, leaving a statutory seven days' notice for the first stoppage on 26 June. Lord Adams, general secretary of ASLEF, accused management of reneging on a deal which bought last year's pay dispute to an end.

A spokesman for London Underground said management was "rather surprised" by the ballot decision and warned that a strike would not help the business or its staff. *Barry Clement*

A burglar died after a struggle with a householder, an inquest heard. Midos "Mick" Baumgartner, 56, of Oakbrook, Derby, told in a recorded police interview how 22-year-old Robert Ingram collapsed as they fought at his home in December 1995, before dying two hours later. The hearing was told that the cause of death was pressure applied to the neck, which caused heart failure. Mr Baumgartner decided to give evidence but on the tape Mr Baumgartner told his wife he returned home at 4.30pm to find his house being burgled and a fight ensued. A jury returned a verdict of accidental death. *PA*

The dredger in the Marchioness disaster has sunk, it was twice since the tragedy seven years ago in which 51 lives were lost, and now called the Borm Rail, under Portuguese ownership – broke in two and went down 500 miles off the coast of Madeira. One crew member died and six others escaped.

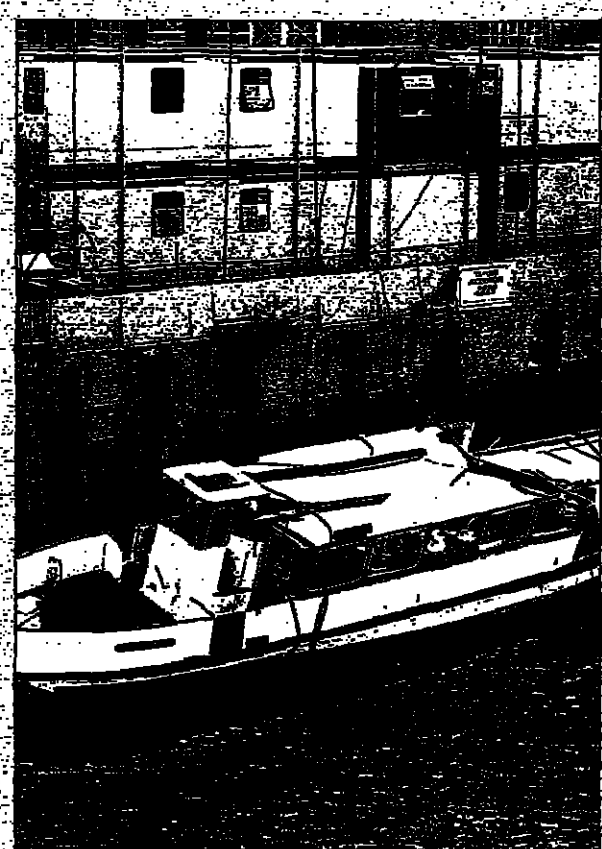
The Home Secretary, Michael Howard, has been drawn into a legal battle involving a couple who are trying to retrieve their car after it was clamped seven weeks ago. He stepped in at the request of Chris and Linda Milnes, 70, in West Yorkshire. Sir Geoffrey Lofthouse, after it emerged they face a bill of more than £1,000 to recover their 2070cc car after originally being told that the fee for releasing the marooned Ford Escort was £95 – and had to be paid within an hour. *PA*

The latest and biggest of the MoD's new agencies, which will be responsible for soldiers' training, was formed yesterday. It is taking over training soldiers to do their jobs from dozens of separate organisations. With 85,000 students passing through 1,900 courses in a year, and 12,000 instructors, it is equivalent to a medium-sized education authority or about eight large universities.

The chief executive, Major General Chris Elliott, will be responsible for delivering trained soldiers to his "customers" the Army's regiments and corps. They will include fully trained paratroopers for the Paras, tank crewmen for the cavalry and helicopter pilots for the Air Corps, divers, linguists and soldiers qualified as nuclear, biological and chemical warfare instructors.

Buses privatisation has not improved services in London, with one of 12 buses not turning up, according to an analysis published by the Capital Transport Campaign. It suggests that one in four passengers are waiting for more than 10 minutes even on high-frequency services. The worst performance is in Merton where 28 per cent of passengers had to wait longer than 10 minutes. The best was Hillingdon with 17 per cent. London Transport stressed that there had been a marginal improvement on high-frequency routes and that the poor performance in Merton was a result of roadworks in the area for much of the year under consideration.

Veteran rocker Rod Stewart is to go on a national tour with his old group The Faces, it was revealed yesterday. The tour, provisionally planned for later this year, will feature the band's original line-up from the 70s, including Ron Wood and Ian McLagan. According to drummer Kenny Jones, the tour will raise money for Ronnie Lane, the fifth member of the band, who is suffering from Multiple Sclerosis. He said that the reunion resulted from a recent secret meeting in Dublin. "There's been a great demand for the Faces to actually reform and do something... It's mainly to help Ronnie Lane and will be in the spirit of Ronnie," Jones, 47, said. The band, perhaps best known for their hit single Stay With Me, split in the mid 70s after Stewart became a tax exile. The 50-year-old rocker, famous for his love of football and blondes, was nervous when they asked him to rejoin them. "We were in a pub and he said, 'Oh do you think the knees would let me? Do you think it'll be all right?' I said, 'Yeah, no problem.' " Jones said.



The Marchioness: The boat that sank her has now itself sank

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Media tycoon jailed for 'horrendous offences' against 16-year-old. Chris Blackhurst reports

Oyston gets six years for rape

Owen Oyston, the owner of Blackpool Football Club, media tycoon and long-time Labour Party donor, was yesterday sentenced to six years in prison for raping and indecently assaulting a 16-year-old girl.

Mr Justice McCullough told him: "You were 58, she was 16. You were rich and powerful with a strong personality. She was young and vulnerable."

She had not, said the judge, "led you on in any way. As Miss B so accurately put it, 'he treated me as an object and I'm

not'." The judge told Liverpool Crown Court that it was impossible to know to what extent Miss B has been traumatised by her ordeal.

Describing them as "horrendous offences" he sentenced Oyston to three years on the indecent assault and six on the rape, the sentences to run concurrently.

The judge said that but for the fact he was 62, of previous good character and that the offences took place four years ago, he would have gone down

for nine years. The verdict delivered after a marathon legal process and a jury deliberation lasting over eight hours, makes Oyston, who is worth an estimated £40m, the richest man to go to prison in Britain for sex offences.

He was acquitted of raping a woman known as "Miss A", at his country mansion. But the jury found he indecently assaulted Miss B, a model who is now 20, by forcing her to have oral sex in a car and then raping her at his home, Cloughton

Hall near Lancaster. Lawyers for Oyston, led by Anthony Scriver QC, said they were considering an appeal.

Proceedings against Oyston began in January last year when he was charged with offences involving six women. Unknown to the jury, a Manchester magistrate ruled last year that he had no case to answer on charges of raping one woman and indecently assaulting two others.

Earlier this year Oyston was tried at Manchester Crown Court on two counts of rape and

one of indecent assault. Separate juries were sworn in for each rape charge and the judge ruled the trial could not be reported until all the sex charges against him had been decided.

On one rape, of a woman in London's Hilton Hotel in Park Lane, he was acquitted. On another, at his home, the jury could not agree and a retrial was ordered. That retrial of Miss A was heard along with the case of Miss B. On one charge of indecently assaulting Miss A he was acquitted in Manchester.

For the last few weeks jurors in Liverpool have listened to a lurid saga of sex in cars, in London, and at his home, involving women from a model agency in Manchester.

At one point during the trial when Miss B recounted how, aged 16, she was subjected to a sex attack by Oyston in the back of a Toyota Supra car and was then forced into further sex at his home, three members of the jury were reduced to tears.

Mr Scriver argued that Oyston deserved some clemen-

cy because the offences occurred a long time ago, his age and the facts showed that little force was used, but his plea cut little ice with the judge.

As Oyston was being led from the dock, he mouthed "I love you" to his daughter Heidi, who was in the public gallery.

A tearful Heidi responded by mouthing to her father: "I love you too."

Detective Sergeant Harry Harrison, of the Greater Manchester police investigation team, said of the young model:

"The last few years have been a very difficult time for the young lady and her family. She has shown tremendous courage in coming to court and giving her evidence, which at times included details of an intimate and traumatic nature. I hope that she can take some consolation from the fact that today's result can be seen as a victory for the average person by showing that no matter who an offender is, action can and will be taken when a person's privacy is violated."

Jokes and deals as philanderer heads for jail

Owen Oyston was on good form in the Liverpool hotel. Talking of big business deals and his plans for Blackpool, the football club he owned, he showed no concern that he was heading for prison, guilty of raping a 16-year-old girl.

Dressed in the vivid orange colours of Blackpool, he was surrounded by his family and close friends, including Billy Bingham, the former Northern Ireland football boss, and Louise Ellman, leader of Lancashire County Council. There was virtually no mention of the three weeks at Liverpool Crown Court which had been hearing accounts of his philandering on a prodigious scale.

Instead, as ever with Oyston, the talk was of football transfers, property developments, plans for a new stadium outside Blackpool, his stake in *Sunday Business*, a new national newspaper, and the addition of Radio Belfast to his network of local radio stations.

There were plenty of jokes about his legal fees but with a fortune estimated at £40m, they should not hurt him too much.

His wife Vicky, his daughters and son had been forced to listen to how he had a stream of affairs and the lurid details of a three-in-a-bed session in the four-poster in their family home. Witnesses told how he often whined and dined young women in London, while his wife stayed at home. Many families would have chuckled him out long ago. A natural actor - ironically he once played in *Crown Court* on television - he is a one-off in the staid, boring world of business with unfashionable trademark long hair and goatee beard, coupled with his fondness for wide-brimmed hats and fur-trimmed coats.

His style is tacky, something belonging to a different age. His home is a Gothic mansion high on the hills near Lancaster.

Inside, there is a great medieval hall, the centrepiece of which is a modern table tennis table. In the garage there is a gold Rolls-Royce, bomb-proof with curtains around the windows, and a cocktail cabinet and TV set in the back. He last used it to go to the Blackpool Illuminations. Next to it is parked a rare Lamborghini. They are hardly ever used, he prefers to cadge lifts everywhere from his employees. Until recently, bison grazed on his front lawn.

He made his money by striking tough deals and shameless self-promotion. For years, night after night, he would appear on television commercials in the North, extolling the virtues of his estate agency chain before falling backwards fully clothed into a swimming pool.

One deal made his fortune. At the height of the property boom he sold the estate agency to Royal Insurance for £33m. His timing was superb, but his negotiations were characterised by a ruthless streak. Royal wanted to get into estate agency - he had the biggest chain in England with 98 branches. According to the close to the negotiations he drove the price up and up, until now, in the cold light of the property recession, it looks like a ridiculous figure.

That cajoling, bullying streak is another side to his nature which is rarely seen in public but is constantly present in business meetings. He has an attention span of zero, hardly listens to what he is being told for any length of time, is constantly thinking of the next money-making opportunity and how he can exploit it to his advantage.

The City's antipathy was explained by his sleight of hand on *It's a Wonderful Life*, which owned radio stations and the *Miss World* contest, when he consistently denied he held more than 29 per cent of the company, yet it was obvious to everyone that behind



Owen Oyston (left) with a dancer from a musical (who was not involved in the case); his Gothic mansion Cloughton Hall (above) where the rape took place; Oyston receiving an honorary degree (far right); and pictured with his wife Vicky (on the right) and his daughter Karen



some of the nominee names on the share register lurked his friends.

Almost a mini-Robert Maxwell in the way he surrounded himself with expensive advisers and always kept people waiting, he went from meeting to meeting, riding roughshod over people's lives, expecting them to comply with his timetable. Employees were used to being rung up at all hours and subjected to roasts. A favourite ploy was the personal touch, a hand on the arm or a pat on the back, as if that was enough compensation for the hell they had just been put through.

He always had to get his own way and lacks a conciliatory side to his personality. When Lancashire Enterprises, a company he jointly owned with Lancashire County Council floated on the stock market, its advisers said they could not sell shares to the public with him on board. Instead of abiding by their decision he reacted furiously, threatening legal action.

At one time a close friend of Neil Kinnock, the former Labour leader, Oyston was once one of the party's biggest individual backers. These days, he does not enjoy the entire with the Labour leadership that he once did. In truth, he is apolitical - the other night he was saying how he hated the soubriquet "socialist millionaire" - and counts Tory MPs, notably Sir Tom Arnold, and Harold Elletson, among his closest friends.

He was never accepted in London. The City tends to regard him with a mixture of disdain and open hostility.

The feeling is mutual. He likes to come down from the North, hold court in the Hilton, have a few meetings, then go back again. With his hippy looks and previous open support for Labour, he will never find acceptance in the Square Mile. Increasingly in recent years, evidence has emerged that this rather odd character, is the target of a concerted smear campaign by senior local Con-

servatives.

For once, where such plots are alleged, the proof exists. Three Tories, Robert Atkins and Lord Blaker, both former ministers, and Bill Harrison, a prominent Blackpool builder, encouraged a local self-styled anti-corruption campaigner, Michael Murrin, to look into Oyston.

Unknown to them, Mr Mur-

rin taped their phone calls and kept the letters about his campaign. Years later, Oyston was able to buy them from him.

The campaign against him has been raised in Commons Early Day Motions. The trio say they did it because they wanted to investigate his dealings with local councillors. In his rape trial, the conspiracy was raised again. It was pointed out

that he was arrested just three weeks before a court case against the ex-ministers was due to be heard in London. In the event, the case was thrown out. The ex-Ministers had no involvement in Oyston's arrest and prosecution.

Used to being constantly on the move, pacing up and down, always on the phone, he will go mad in prison. For one thing he

will be denied the commodity he loves best after money - namely women. His womanising was extraordinarily prodigious and blatant. Girls, normally strikingly beautiful, were always around him, especially on his trips to London. He once boasted of having had sex with two Miss Worlds. Those days are far behind him now.

Old bones, stained teeth, one trunk and the Missing Link

CHARLES ARTHUR
Science Correspondent

After 43 years of detective work, the search for the perpetrator of the biggest scientific hoax of the century is finally over - and the motive has been revealed as one man's wish for a weekly wage instead of piece-work payment.

"Pitdown Man", a faked fossil discovered in 1912, ruined the reputation of Arthur Smith Woodward, keeper of paleontology at the Natural History Museum. He went to his death insisting that the skull discovered in a Sussex quarry was that of the earliest Englishman, and that the carved elephant bone found with it (shaped suspiciously like a cricket bat) was genuine.

But in 1953, five years after Woodward died, the fossils were shown to be fakes: the skull, instead of being the "missing link" between ape and man, was composed of an orangutan jaw and a man's head. The other fossils were also found to be fakes, made of stained and carved old bones.

However, the identity of the hoaxer remained a mystery. Over the years, it was blamed variously on Charles Dawson, a lawyer who first found the remains, on Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, creator of Sherlock Holmes, and on Teilhard de Chardin, the noted priest and paleontologist.

But the discovery by the Natural History Museum of an old canvas trunk in its attic seems to have answered the question.



Martin A.C. Hinton (above, centre) is now thought to have created the skull of 'Pitdown Man' (below left)



Inside were human teeth, which had been stained like those of the "fossils". The trunk's owner was the late Martin A.C. Hinton, the museum's curator of zoology at the time of the fraud.

"I'm 100 per cent certain that it was him," said Brian Gar-

diner, professor of paleontology at King's College, London, yesterday. "The contents of the trunk clinch it."

Professor Gardiner first had a hunch that it was Hinton in 1953, when he was working at the museum as a student as the

fraud was exposed. He will give a lecture on his conclusion tomorrow night to the Linnean Society. "Hinton was known as a practical joker. Dawson was the fall guy for his practical jokes, just a gullible solicitor. Hinton's motive is shown by some letters," he said yesterday.

"In 1910, Hinton was just a summer student working there in his holidays, and he wrote to Woodward asking to work at the museum cataloguing rodent remains." He was offered £130 - after the work was complete. Hinton, then 27, asked for a weekly payment. Woodward is thought to have been unmoved - which piqued Hinton, a prodigy who at 16 had had a paper published on how fossils become stained by river deposits.

The contents of the trunk show that Hinton produced the fakes by careful staining: the teeth were his test runs. The key clues for the Pitdown detectives are the presence of traces of chromium metal in the teeth, the trunk - and the Pitdown bones. The chromium is the missing link which finally fingers Hinton.

The only question that remains is why Hinton did not own up once Woodward had swallowed the bait. "I think it was all taken so seriously and attracted so much attention that he couldn't," said Henry Gee of the science journal *Nature*, which today publishes a full account of the search. "The trouble now is that all the suspects are dead and buried. You would have to be Inspector Morse to answer that one."



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news

Carey's church is too preachy, says Runcie

ANDREW BROWN
Religious Affairs Correspondent

Lord Runcie, the former Archbishop of Canterbury, has warned of dangers in the "Preachy Church" which he sees emerging under his successor, Dr George Carey.

Speaking in the last of the BBC Radio 4 programs *The Purple, the blue and the red*, Lord Runcie said: "The danger of the management Church, and the sort of preachy Church, is that it is able, much more effectively, to address a much narrower constituency."

Lord Runcie's fear that the Church is becoming more distant from the centres of power and debate in England as it becomes better managed and more streamlined is bound to renew the controversy over reforms in the Church.

His remarks echo concerns expressed in the autumn when the Church's General Synod debated the report of a commit-

tee chaired by the bishop of Durham, the Rt Rev Michael Turnbull, which proposed the establishment of a central committee to govern the Church of England and unite the powers of the General Synod and the two archbishops.

"We are creating a Church which is better organised financially, better governed synodically, better promoted by its enthusiastic and specialist ministries, but actually it is addressing a smaller and smaller constituency," said Lord Runcie.

His interpretation was disputed by a spokesman for the General Synod, who said that it was wrong to speak of a smaller and smaller constituency when Church attendance has been stable for the last five years. "The Church of England remains totally committed to its outward-looking mission to the whole nation. The Church's involvement in evangelism, in social action in deprived urban areas and elsewhere, and in

debate about moral issues affecting the whole of society is as strong as ever," the spokesman said.

However, the Bishop of Worcester, the Rt Rev Phillip Goodrich, was more sympathetic to the former Archbishop. "It's a very interesting way of putting the problem," he said. But he thought the reorganisation of the Church was inevitable after the Church Commissioners, who manage its £3bn assets, lost £800m in property speculation land.

"It is all very well Lord Runcie saying this, but the Church which he is really wanting was, of course, based on the fact that it was pretty much provided for by the Church Commissioners," said Bishop Goodrich.

"We are having to be better organised, because after all, our stipendiary clergy are paid for by the laity. All the professions are finding this - everything has to be brought under management teams."

Christian exhibition: Evangelical show expands into religious mainstream



If the vestment fits: Rev David Vince of Droithwich tries on a cassock at the Christian Resources Exhibition at Esher, Surrey. Photograph: Brian Harris

Churches set out stalls for shopping spree

ANDREW BROWN

More than 100 million communion wafers are eaten in England every year, and 30 million of them are made by the firm of FA Dumont, in Folkestone, Kent. They are available in individual sizes, and in larger versions, pre-scored to break into bite-sized pieces, and with sealed edges to avoid crumbs.

This year's marketing development is to package the wafers in rolls of only 100 each, instead of packets of 250, according to David Pead, a director of the firm at this year's Christian Resources Exhibition, held at Esher in Surrey.

It is the right place to advertise his services: the exhibition expects to attract around 2,000 clergy and 10,000 lay visitors over the next week, eager to sample everything necessary for professional Christians.

There are embroiderers and tailors of vestments. There were bookstalls, a software shop; sellers of Christian holidays and special Christian T-shirts, called Majestees. Numerous firms competed to make church furniture, and, one, Pew Corner, to buy it: they sell on old pews and benches to wine bars.

Evangelical organisations promoted tales of revival in Israel, in prison, and in Siberia. One stall gamely handed out leaflets prophesying a coming war between Russia and Israel, a staple of millennial enthusiasts in the days before the end of communism. But the show is becoming more and more mainstream from its evangelical beginnings. This year it was opened by the Roman Catholic bishop of Portsmouth, the Rt Rev Crispian Hollis; and wished well by all the mainstream churches.

There was every sort of musical instrument on sale, from fish-shaped tambourines to full-scale organs. Chris Wright, a woodworker from Yorkshire, also displayed a monitor with map of the Diocese of Bradford on it. He is a founder of Christians on the Internet.

God is very big in cyberspace. A recent search of the World Wide Web found 1.2 million mentions of His name there, and the computers connected to the Internet drew the biggest crowds of any exhibit, patiently waiting their turn, and promoting one of the organisers to remark: "They also surf who only stand and wait."

British boy, 13, held in Nigeria

JASON BENNETTO
Crime Correspondent

A 13-year-old boy from London has been abducted and held captive for the past four weeks in Nigeria by the country's military Government, it was revealed yesterday.

The family of John-Paul Mokulou, who was visiting relatives during a holiday to Nigeria, believe he is being held hostage by the country's junta in an attempt to lure his father into an attempt to secure the release of her son.

Glenda Jackson, the Labour MP who represents the family who live in Hampstead, north-west London, yesterday condemned the Nigerian authorities' actions as "outrageous and unacceptable".

John-Paul, who was born in Britain, was arrested by Nigerian security forces on 23 April while he was staying with his father in the capital, Lagos. His father, who escaped during the raid, is believed to be a cousin of the former president of Nigeria and may be seen as a threat to the existing regime.

The boy is being held in a Nigerian Special Security Services secure complex in Lagos. At first the authorities denied to relatives and the British Consular officials that John-Paul, who has dual nationality, was being held. However they have since confirmed his existence but have refused to allow anyone to see him.

They are convinced he is being held hostage to try and force his father to give himself up. The Commonwealth last



John-Paul Mokulou: Family believes father is target

month agreed to tightening sanctions until General Sani Abacha's military Government shows greater respect for human rights.

Ms Jackson said: "John Paul is a 13-year-old British schoolboy, travelling on a British passport, and there can be no excuse for his abduction and continuing imprisonment."

"I urge the Foreign Office to do everything in its power to secure his immediate release."

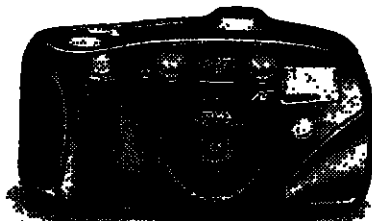
Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary, has been informed about the case and consular staff are believed to be involved in behind the scenes negotiations. A Foreign Office spokesman said yesterday: "Although [John-Paul] holds dual nationality, we have pressed hard for consular access to see him on a number of occasions, since he is a minor."

"We are concerned about his welfare. However the family have told us that further intervention may be detrimental."

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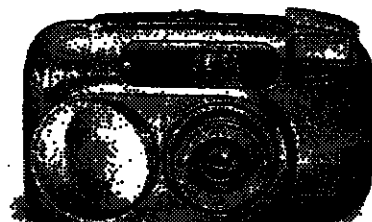
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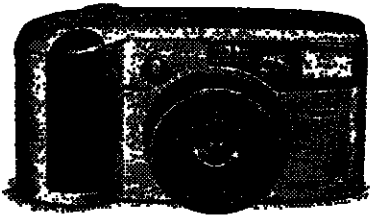
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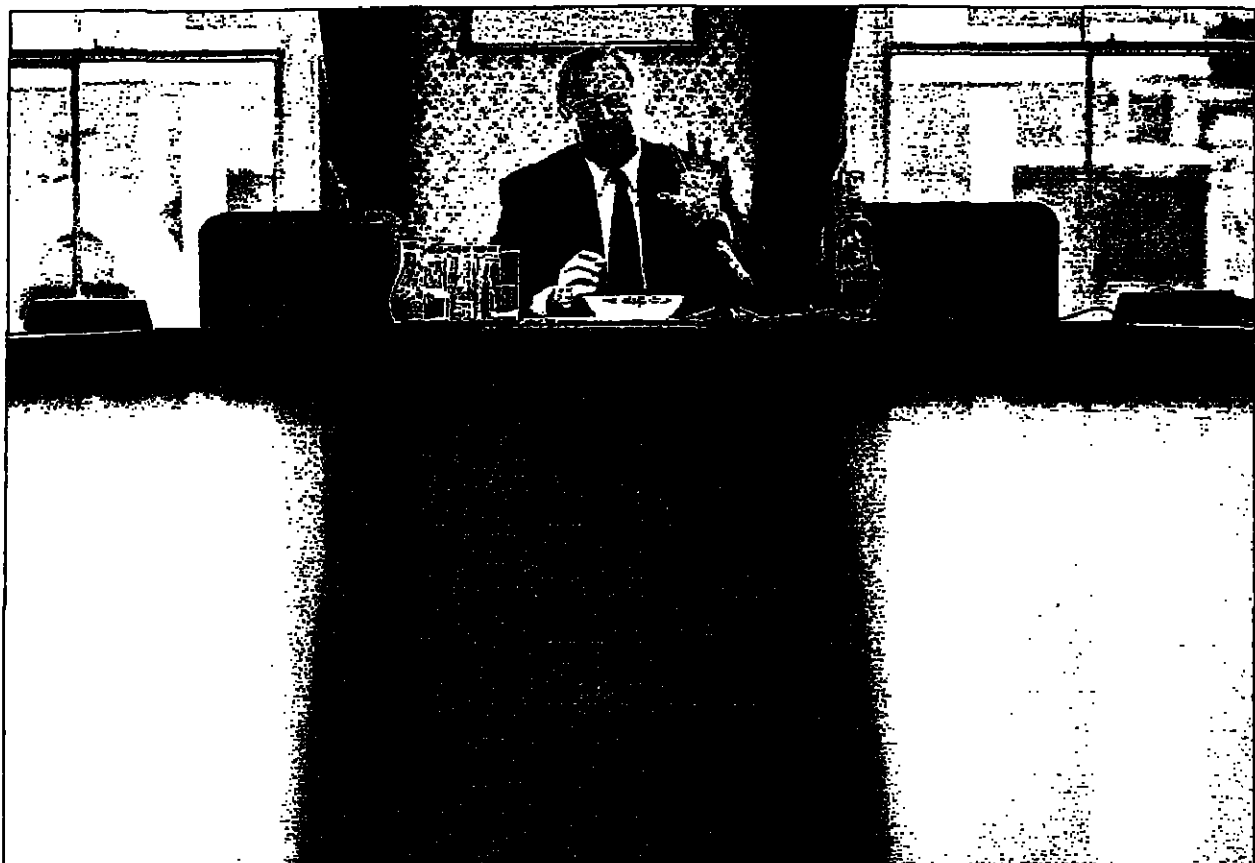
Lawyer attacks Society chief

PATRICIA WYNN DAVIES

Criticisms of the beleaguered Law Society President Martin Mears reached new heights yesterday when a high-profile former leader branded him and his deputy Robert Sayer unsuitable to lead the profession and accused them of doing it positive harm.

The onslaught from Rodger Pannone, a leading personal injury lawyer who was president two years ago, comes three weeks before elections to the top jobs in the society, which regulates the country's 70,000 solicitors. It ranks as the most outspoken contribution yet to the factional war sparked by Mr Mears's election last July. Mr Mears, however, dismissed the attack as "nothing new".

Mr Pannone told a press conference that Mr Mears should not be "rubbished" for having shaken up the existing structure. But in a statement, Mr Pannone said: "I have been reluctant to voice criticisms publicly. . . The current president of the Law Society, Mr Mears, and his vice-president Mr Say-



Rodger Pannone addressing the press at the Law Society's London headquarters yesterday. Photograph: Philip Meech

er have not been so constrained. Their public statements and desire to stay in office have resulted in a political regime which is unedifying and which could well debase the good name of the Law Society. "Through lack of meaningful dialogue, the Law Society has

for the past 10 months begun to lose the respect of the decision-makers and opinion-formers in government, the political parties, the judiciary, the Bar and the wider national and international legal and commercial communities."

to explain the reasons for his opposition had been met with "personal vilification from sources close to the president". Outsiders viewed the activities of the Law Society as a "humorous farce", he added.

Mr Mears said yesterday: "This sort of cry of pain and in-

dignation we have been hearing from our opponents since the beginning. There's nothing new here. I am subjected to this unremitting campaign of vilification and disinformation, yet when I go round local law societies I am well, and enthusiastically, received."

Tory divorce Bill left in 'a mess'

PATRICIA WYNN DAVIES
Legal Affairs Editor

The Government last night launched a concerted lobbying campaign to avert a Commons defeat on the Family Law Bill after the Law Society withdrew its support.

The society's family law committee, which represents thousands of divorce lawyers, said the Bill's tortuous Commons stages had rendered it "a mess, creating more problems than it solves."

The move will make it easier for Labour, whose legal affairs spokesman Paul Boateng has already threatened to withdraw his party's backing, to instruct its MPs to vote against or abstain on the controversial measure when it reaches its Commons Third Reading next month.

Hilary Siddle, chairman of the society's family law committee said: "The Law Society supported the Bill's original principles, but changes to it have destroyed any consistent policy objectives."

Jonathan Evans, the Lord Chancellor's Department minister in charge of the Bill, last

night wrote to MPs in all parties urging them to back the Bill, saying: "The current system of divorce lacks support on all sides of the House. It permits 'quickie' divorces in as little as three months on the basis of spurious allegations, without the couple having to give thought to the consequences of their actions. The Family Law Bill heralds the end of this damaging and nonsensical system."

Changes during the Committee Stage had strengthened the Bill's proposals on supporting marriage and protecting those who were most vulnerable, Mr Evans insisted.

Ministers are equally determined to maximise potential embarrassment for Labour if it directs its MPs to withhold support. Some of the changes, such as a 3-month quarantine period to facilitate reconciliation, which legal groups now object to, were made with active Labour support, while ditching the Bill would mean ditching pension splitting, enhanced protections against domestic violence while keeping the "quickie" divorce system.

Mr Evans said: "If the Labour party were to decide to

oppose this Bill it would be nothing to do with the Bill and everything to do with party politics."

Labour would almost certainly face a backlash from some of its MPs as well, while the Conservative Family Campaign pointedly reaffirmed its support for the Bill last night.

Julian Brazier, Conservative MP for Canterbury, the campaign's chairman, attacked the Law Society's decision and said: "I am now firmly behind the Bill. It represents an enormous improvement."

Thelma Fisher, director of National Family Mediation, said her organisation also remained committed to the Bill. "NFM considers that there are many aspects of the Bill that will better serve the needs of divorcing parents and, particularly, their children, by removing much of the acrimony from the divorce process. The Law Society's withdrawal of support for the Bill is regretted."

But Mr Boateng called the society's decision "a body blow to a battered and beleaguered Bill whose days must now be numbered."

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to Michael's each year, from every level of society. But they are only the tip of the iceberg. Thousands more children are the victims of less obvious forms of cruelty.

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Ship shape: Final touches being put to an exhibit in a new gallery at the Historic Dockyard at Chatham, Kent, devoted to the 170-year story of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, founded in 1824. The display opens on Saturday
Photograph: Tony Buckingham

Heads quitting profession in record numbers

JUDITH JUDD
Education Editor

Record numbers of London head teachers are leaving the profession early, many of them because of stress, the National Association of Head Teachers said yesterday.

Heads say stress is particularly bad in London because of the need to take action against the above-average numbers of poor teachers and because of increasing threats from violent parents.

They also blame impossible workloads and lack of support from governors and local authorities.

Of the 183 London heads retiring this year, 110 are leaving early, 43 for medical reasons, usually related to stress. Nineteen have been forced out and 12 are leaving because they are redundant.

Fourteen of those leaving

because of ill health are under 50 and only four are over 60.

During the last four months, 54 London heads have asked the association for advice about early retirement. Eight of these have had breakdowns. Many have been in post for only a short period of time.

The figures represent a big increase on last year.

Brian Fuller, the association's regional officer, said: "Teacher competency is a particular problem. In the Eighties, it was very difficult to recruit anybody in London. A lot of people were appointed who should not have been."

"It is down to heads to take disciplinary action. Some authorities don't back heads up in the action. A lot of governors also back down from dismissing teachers after the head has gone through agony."

More parents, he said, were threatening both teachers and staff and even vandalising their cars. "Since Christmas, I have been getting four or five calls a week from heads who want to get out of the profession."

The association said spending cuts, changes in legislation, increased public accountability and public criticism after inspection reports had all increased heads' load. The figures were simply the tip of the iceberg, it added: "For every head

retiring early, there are two or three just waiting to reach 50 years of age in order to go."

Applications for London headships are declining fast. A study by Oxford Brookes University earlier this year showed that nearly 40 per cent of inner London headships were re-advertised. Deputy heads are reluctant to apply for headships.

One inner London secondary school appointed a head after four attempts but the head left after 12 months. A grant-maintained secondary school attracted only three applications. Even a large primary school in an affluent part of London had just six applications.

David Hart, the association's general secretary, said: "London schools can ill-afford to lose such a quantity of experienced talent. City schools often provide for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils in the country. They desperately need stability and continuity."

"New ways must be found to encourage able, experienced heads and deputies to work and stay in city schools, otherwise this hemorrhaging of talent will set back efforts to raise standards in the schools of the capital city."

Mr Fuller said that the cost of housing in London made it difficult for teachers from outside the city to move into it.

'I was a teacher not a manager'

JUDITH JUDD

CASE STUDY

At the age of 50 Bob Dacey retired from his job as head of an inner-London primary school, after a breakdown caused by the stresses of his job.

After more than 10 years as a head in Southwark he chose to leave a profession he loved, weighed down, he says, by the administrative burdens placed on heads by the Government's reforms.

Even before the 1988 Reform Act introduced devolved budgets for schools, Southwark schools had more than their share of difficulties.

Mr Dacey's school was a tough one. Out of 300 children, 30 were on the at-risk register and 23 languages were spoken.

Once schools had to run their own budgets and the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) was dismantled, heads' burdens increased.

Some of Mr Dacey's governors had little management experience, and in some weeks he spent more time explaining school policy to them than he did with his pupils.

Mr Dacey, who retired last summer, said: "When I was appointed a head in 1984, I enjoyed it. I was with the children a great deal and my main remit was ensuring the quality of teaching."

"Then ILEA went and I was taken over by Southwark, which had not run an education department. Budgets were devolved and virtually total responsibility for everything within school and the school grounds. I taught maths so the finances didn't present a problem but I was a teacher, not a manager. It wasn't something I had been appointed for, trained for, or had much aptitude for."

Money became tighter. Class sizes rose and funds for support staff were short. The combination of his old duties with his new ones eventually proved too much for him.

"I was unable to sleep. I was carrying round this terrible feeling of apprehension and anxiety. I couldn't concentrate. I was mentally and physically exhausted."

Dublin owns up over bungled extradition case

ALAN MURDOCH
Dublin

The Dail had to be adjourned twice yesterday amid uproar after a minister admitted an IRA extradition fiasco blamed on British errors was in fact the result of blunders by Irish police.

The unprecedented climb-down saw Ireland's justice minister admit that gardai were to blame all along for bungling the extradition of an IRA bombing suspect last month. At the time, Dublin publicly claimed British authorities were responsible.

Following protracted questioning by an Opposition TD, the minister, Nora Owen, conceded in a written reply that the original British application for the extradition of Anthony Duncan, 27, wanted for questioning in connection with Semtex bombs in Brighton and Bogor Regis in 1994, was mislaid during photocopying by gardai.

The disclosure led to angry scenes in the Dail, which had to be adjourned twice by the Ceann Comhairle (Speaker) as Opposition parties demanded an immediate emergency debate. The Taoiseach, John Bruton, was only willing to agree to a debate next week.

It was suggested yesterday that the error over the warrant was not spotted because of the quality of the photocopies. In Dublin district court on 13 April, Irish state counsel indicated that the documents had

been "fundamentally flawed". The embarrassment has increased pressure on the embattled Mrs Owen, whose term of office has coincided with a series of garda failures.

These have included the failure to stop a multi-million pound security depot robbery carried out after weeks of surveillance was abandoned; the overlooking by detectives at the scene of the crime of a murder weapon used to kill a five-year-old; and the disappearance of the corpse of a murdered man in Cork City from under detectives' noses. In addition, the minister has been unable to settle a bitter feud between rival garda representative bodies following a split.

Following yesterday's disclosure, Progressive Democrat TD Liz O'Donnell claimed that "highly placed [Irish] government sources misled the public and the media when they pointed the finger of blame at the UK authorities". And she asked: "Was the minister being kept in the dark, or was the Department of Justice keeping the Dail in the dark?"

Pointing out that the earlier Irish accusations had prompted calls for the resignation of the British Attorney General, Ms O'Donnell went on to ask "whether anyone in Ireland will accept responsibility for this comedy of errors, compounded by a misleading accusation against the British".

NEWSPAPERS SUPPORT RECYCLING

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news

NHS reform: Unions furious at call for 'generic' workforce to be trained in everything from ward cleaning to bottom wiping Cleaners become carers in brave new world

NICHOLAS TIMMINS
Public Policy Editor

A revolution in the NHS workforce was called for yesterday which within a decade will see 40 per cent of the nursing and therapist workforce turned into multi-skilled "generic carers".

Staff will be trained but not professionally qualified, providing everything from ward cleaning and maintenance to bottom wiping, physiotherapy, ECGs and simple X-rays.

The change – which is likely also to hit the private sector – is needed to produce the huge increase in productivity necessary for the NHS survive and to cope with mounting shortages of doctors, nurses and professional and technical staff, a report from Manchester University's Health Services Management unit said.

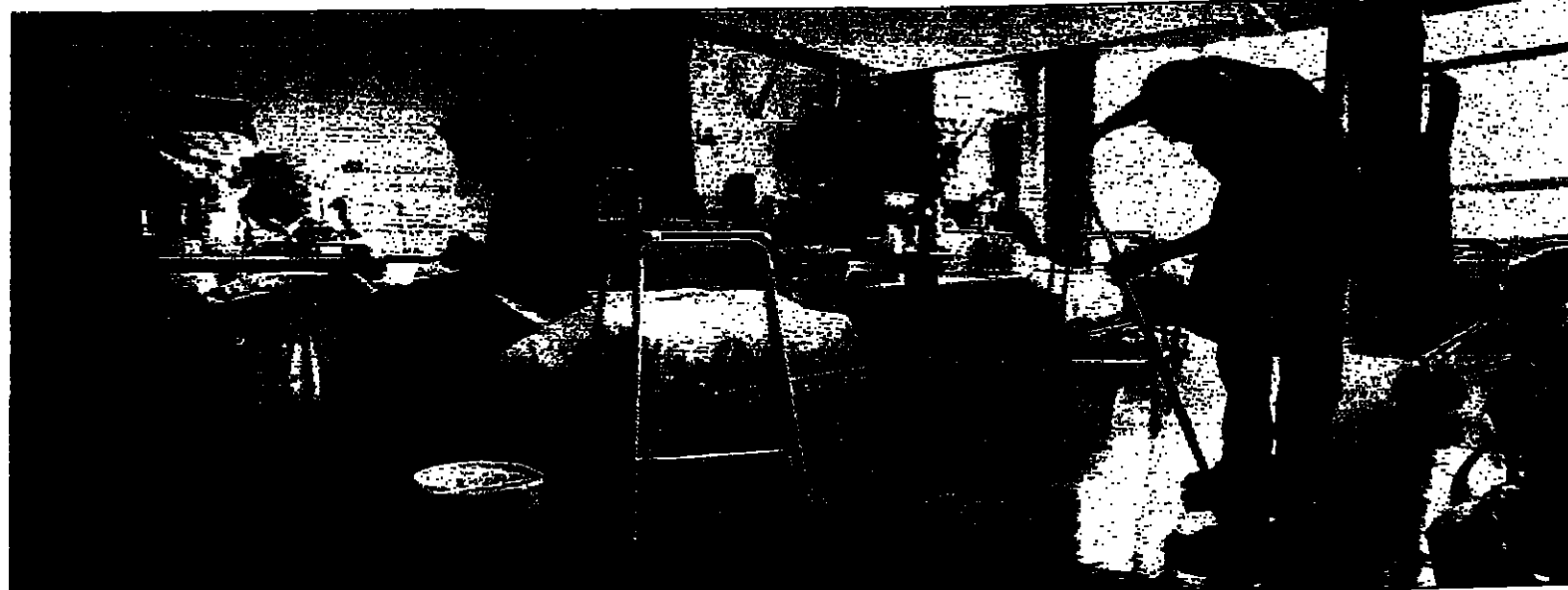
The report, launched by the National Association of Health Authorities and produced with the support of the NHS Trust Federation, was greeted with horror by the nursing unions.

Christine Hancock, the general secretary of the Royal College of Nursing accusing it of being "out of touch with reality" and warning it could "destroy nursing".

To suggest that 40 per cent of the 'generic' carers responsible for hands on patient care will be support workers will shock patients and nurses. It flies in the face of the available research about what is best for patients," she said. The proposals had little to do with helping patients "and everything to do with cost cutting".

The report's authors, however, argued the changes were already happening. Far from endangering patients they could improve care, provide more job security, produce new recruits for nursing and medicine and release doctors, nurses and therapists for the tasks which really require their skills.

Over the past decade, the proportion of qualified staff in the NHS has risen, the report says. But there are major shortfalls of doctors in prospect.



Clean start: Shortfalls in specialist staff must be countered by training more staff in more skills, says a new report

Photograph: Philip Meech

There is a "nightmare" over recruiting theatre, intensive care and other specialist nurses and difficulties in recruiting occupational and other therapists.

At present, jobs with overlapping skills are divided up "inflexibly", Professor Michael Schofield of the Manchester unit said, with individuals

"entering a particular professional box" at age 18 in which they are then stuck for life. "Multi-skilling" would train support workers in particular

occupational skills centred round the patient's needs rather than professional divisions. Ambulance personnel already show that workers can

be trained to be skilled paramedics, and work such as taking blood could be transferred to support workers. That in turn would release nurses.

The range of skills support workers could cover by 2005 include ward housekeeping and cleaning, core nursing such as from bathing and toileting patients, most physiotherapy, admitting and discharging within guidelines, providing discharge and transfer letters, undertaking some pathology tests, and simpler X-rays.

MSF, which represents a range of qualified health care staff, said the change involved "a replacement of skilled with unskilled staff on an unprecedented scale". The report's call for trusts to use local pay to help bring about the changes was also "highly provocative".

However, the UKCC which oversees nurse training, said the report was "timely" and "an interesting contribution to an important debate". Any changes "must be in the best interests of patient care", Sue Norman, its chief executive said.

□ *The Future Healthcare Workforce*, HMSU, Devonshire House, Manchester M13 9PL £15.95

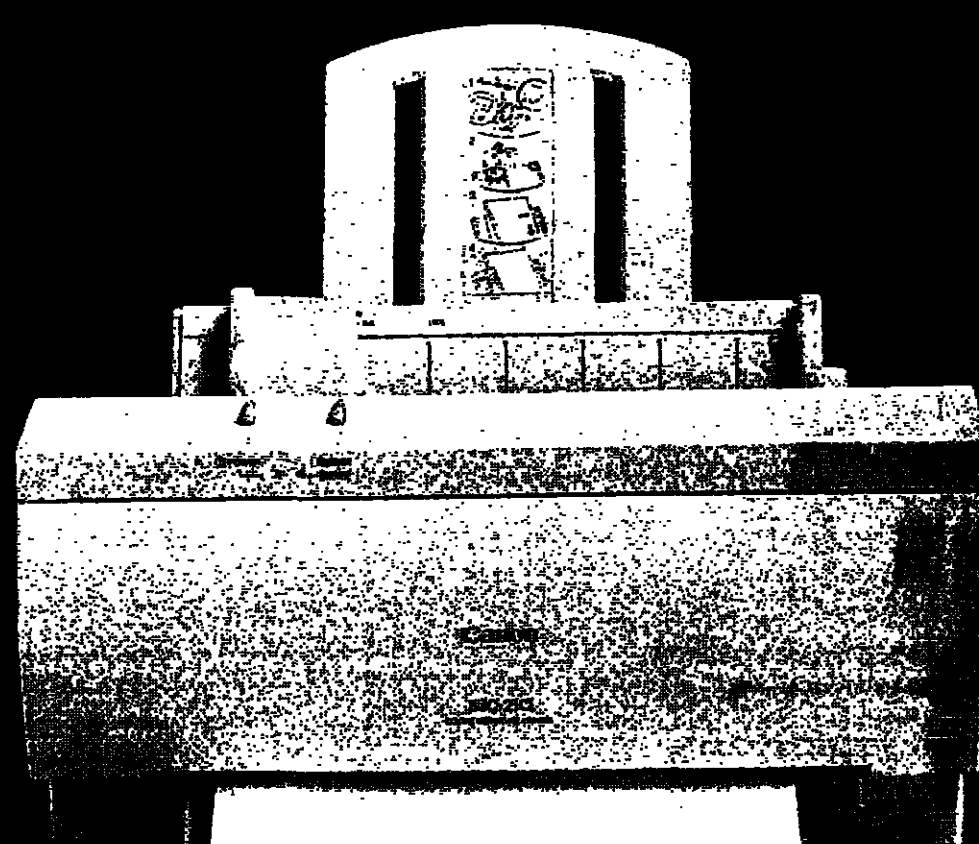
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'Health care is changing and we must respond'

Kingston NHS Trust in Surrey has already taken the first steps towards the new support worker – employing dozens of "team assistants" in its 140-bed medical unit.

The change has involved not just substituting the skills of nurses for trained-up cleaners, porters and maintenance staff, but a wholesale switch to what Susan Legg, the trust's director of nursing, calls "patient-focused care".

The unit has its own X-ray and pathology on site. Qualified nurses lead the teams with assistants already undertaking tasks from traditional cleaning and portering, to maintenance, toileting and bathing patients, helping them with mobility using exercises prescribed by physiotherapists, taking blood for tests and undertaking other care traditionally provided by professional staff. A radiographer has been trained to assist doctors with endoscopies – the use of fibre-optic cameras inside the body – a task usually done by technicians or nurses. Nurses now insert the cannulas for drips and can re-site them without calling junior doctors out.

The unit's heaviest cleaning, portering and maintenance is still done by "unit stewards". But they too are trained to help feed, wash and toilet patients. The idea that this endangers

patients and risks infection is dismissed by Miss Legg. "In the past we have had nurses empty bed pans and then change dressings," she says. "There is no difference between that and cleaning a toilet. It is about proper infection control and we train people in that."

Team assistants may be cheaper to employ than fully qualified nurses, but Ms Legg insists the exercise is "driven by quality of care" – based on patient needs and "competence-based training". Growing numbers of services are delivered without the patient having to travel round the hospital. Time spent in meetings, on paperwork and in waiting for qualified staff is reduced. It no longer takes five forms to get a light bulb changed.

The NHS, Ms Legg added, "has never had all qualified staff. We have had nursing auxiliaries for years. But this provides individuals with the chance of a far more satisfying and flexible job. Some have already gone on to do their nurse training. Health care is changing, and we must respond".

'Whisper concrete' cuts roar of traffic

CHRISTIAN WOLMAR
Transport Correspondent

People living near major roads may get some relief from the noise thanks to a Government decision that road builders should be encouraged to use "whisper concrete".

The Highways Agency, the Government agency responsible for building and maintaining Britain's major roads, has approved the use of the less noisy road surface.

Contractors will be available to include whisper concrete as an option for all roads where concrete is technically suitable but it will be up to contractors, rather than the Highways Agency, to select the specification.

However, the cost of the concrete is about 10 per cent higher than conventional surfaces and this may deter some contractors. The Agency will, however, make whisper

concrete mandatory for roads carrying 75,000 vehicles or more per day, and for those in noise-sensitive areas.

The new type of concrete has been tested on two roads, the M18 in Yorkshire and the A50 in Derbyshire and the Agency found that no additional maintenance costs resulted from its use, despite the harsh winter conditions earlier this year.

On average, noise levels are about two decibels lower for light vehicles and one for heavy vehicles. While this does not sound much, a drop of three decibels in the average noise would be equivalent to halving the traffic flow.

Whisper concrete differs from conventional concrete surface in that some of the aggregate is left exposed, rather than brushed into grooves, which results in less noise. The new surface has been shown to be just as skid resistant as older types.

DAILY POEM

In the Peloponnese

By NS Thompson

No sickles honed cut terraces of corn;
Only her own thin blade shaves grass to feed
The hunched, hunched row of glossy rabbits fed
Up for the welcome and the hoped return.

The kitchen (whitewashed shrine of postcards, each
Stamped "Airmail", bicycle delivered, placed
Beside dried palm-leaf cross and long-dead face
And Houston, Montreal, Virginia Beach ...)

Keeps her preserved above an ageless bay
Where pulling cars once swept out, dressed for war:
Mikis is doctor. Costas now has store ...
She pulls up threads and starts again each day.

N.S. Thompson lectures in English at Christ Church, Oxford and is poetry editor of *New Poetry Quarterly*. His poems, translations and reviews have appeared in *Ambit*, *Encounter*, *Modern Poetry in Translation*, *Oxford Poetry*, *PN Review*, the *TLS* and *New Writing* 5.

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Pedestrian zone: Walkers on the Golden Road over the Preseli mountains in Pembrokeshire

Photograph: Rob Stratton

Ramblers rejoice as high road is declared off-limits

RICHARD SMITH

Welsh ramblers and farmers are celebrating victory after halting in its tracks one of the curses of the countryside: the four-wheel drive vehicle.

When motorists began using the windswept Golden Road along the ridgeway over the Preseli mountains in the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park it provoked a confrontation with walkers, farmers and archaeologists.

The four-wheel drive enthusiasts argued that they were entitled to use the route as it had been a highway since Roman times. Opponents countered that it was nothing more than a bridleway and said its claim to being a Roman road was based on an 18th century forgery.

Now the Secretary of State for Wales, William Hague, has upheld a public inquiry decision which makes it illegal for vehicles to use the nine-mile trail.

The route has been used for more than 4,000 years, but protesters claim the recent arrival

of recreational off-road drivers have churned up the ground and caused serious erosion in a sensitive area, which was the source of the blue-spotted dolomite rock used to build Stonehenge.

The remains of Iron-Age forts and neolithic burial chambers have also been found in the area, which is a site of special scientific interest because of a colony of southern damselflies which live in the wet upland peatlands and heather.

War between the off-roaders and the ramblers' faction was declared in 1991 after Dyfed County Council reclassified the track as a bridleway instead of a road used as a public path. The off-roaders found that the route was clearly marked as a Roman road on the first one-inch Ordnance Survey map of the area produced in the 1830s, and used it as evidence at the subsequent public inquiry.

The inquiry found against them, however, after research by the ramblers proved that the Golden Road's links with Roman times were a forgery

dreamt up by an 18th century historian - and then turned into legend by the Victorian antiquarian, Sir Richard Fenton, who was anxious to glamorise Pembrokeshire's past.

Peter Harwood, vice chairman of the Welsh Ramblers Association, said: "We are absolutely over the moon... These vehicles were leaving ruts two feet deep and once the fragile topsoil is broken next time it rains you get terrific erosion of the under-soil."

"The sudden appearance of three or four of these vehicles crashing and banging and slithering around has made quiet enjoyment of this wonderful place well nigh impossible at times."

Heather James, of the Dyfed Archaeological Trust, added: "This is a spectacularly beautiful and very special place which needs protecting. It's not just a few monuments, there are whole relic landscapes going back to the fourth millennium BC."

National Park officials will erect warning notices this weekend and rangers will carry out patrols to enforce the vehicle ban.

Race bias fear over privatised rail firms

BARRIE CLEMENT
Labour Editor

Black and Asian railway workers could face increased discrimination because of the privatisation of their industry, according to the Commission for Racial Equality.

Commission leaders yesterday declared that equal opportunities policies could be the first victim of the break-up of British Rail. Sue Scott, senior executive officer, said the fight for racial justice would be "harder work" when there were numerous companies to deal with rather than one centralised structure.

Bob Purkiss, TUC representative on the commission, said: "If an organisation becomes cash-driven one of the first things to go out of the window is equal opportunities and ethnic monitoring."

Senior representatives of the commission were speaking at the launch of a report on the selection of train drivers which urged employers in all industries to check recruitment procedures, including the allegedly scientific psychometric tests, to ensure that members of ethnic minorities were not suffering from indirect discrimination.

The study, *A Fair Test? Selecting Train Drivers at British Rail*, followed complaints of discrimination by eight Asian guards at Paddington who were refused jobs as drivers.

The report found that selection procedures were biased against members of ethnic minorities, especially Asians. The document had allegedly been the subject of a "gagging order" from British Rail, according to Steve Blinkhorn, its author.

Mr Blinkhorn, a consultant psychologist, said it had taken five years for BR to agree to release his findings. He had found that selection procedures were seriously flawed. "If I designed a system to discriminate against Asians, I could not have done it better," he said. The report

found that many of the criteria used to choose drivers were irrelevant to the job. Employees found that if their first language was not English they were disadvantaged by the test.

Mr Blinkhorn said BR assumed the test was able to examine whether potential drivers were "safe" or not. However, he said the procedures were found to be inadequate.

His assertions were rejected by Steve Fletcher, of BR's privatised psychology unit. He said the procedures were able to discover whether or not a potential recruit would operate trains safely. Dr Fletcher pointed out that the unit's business had burgeoned under the new privatised regime and that much of its activity was involved with equal opportunities. The new businesses were concerned to ensure that such policies were maintained.

Mr Purkiss said the CRE wanted to be sure that employers got the best people for the job and that selection was not based on "prejudice, assumptions and irrelevant tests". He said black people were still twice as likely to be unemployed and suffer from institutional prejudice.

Lew Adams, general secretary of the train drivers' union Aslef, said that his organisation employed an equal opportunities official who was vigilant over the selection of women and members of ethnic minorities to driving jobs. "As a union we are absolutely opposed to racial discrimination and harassment in any form," he said.

Gareth Hadley, BR's employee relations director, said that carefully-devised tests could reduce the potential for discrimination by eliminating subjectivity, but they had to be properly validated and carefully applied to minimise risks of unfairness. "The lessons learnt in selection processes have been applied throughout the rail industry as part of the initiatives promoting equality of opportunities."

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4th Issue Yearly	£1,000	4.90%	-	3.92%
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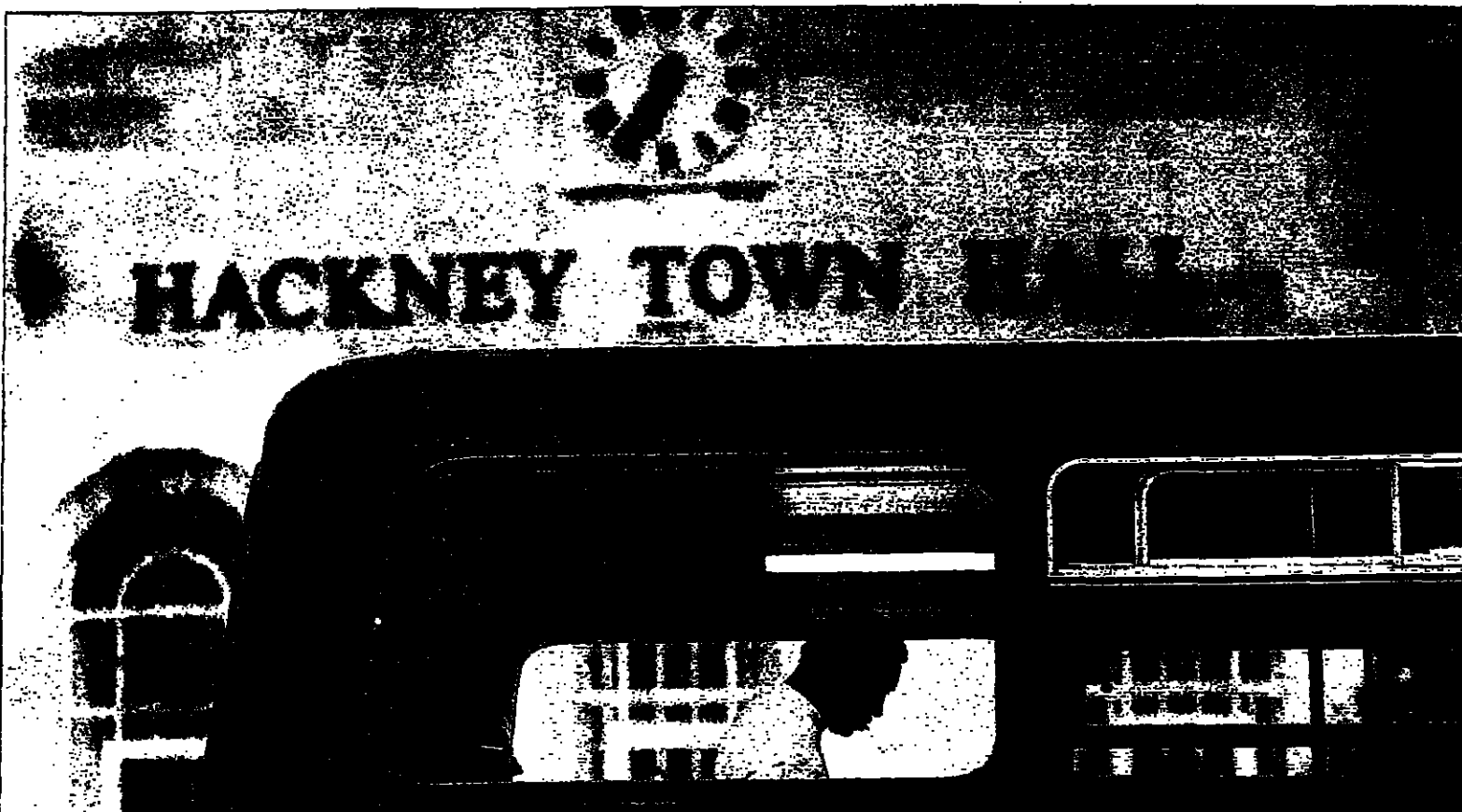
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New Labour, Old Labour: Tensions rise as NEC disbands Hackney, sacks a 'terrorist' candidate and hears of Blair 'favouritism'



Hackney: The NEC has spent months investigating the ruling Labour group over allegations of dirty tricks and vote-rigging. Photograph: Philip Meech

Councillors face re-affirming the party rules

STEVE BOGGAN
Chief Reporter

The ruling Labour Group on Hackney Council in north-east London was disbanded by the national party yesterday in a move likely to result in further chaos within Britain's poorest borough.

Thirty-nine Labour councillors were told by the party's National Executive Committee that they would have to sign special declarations before they would be allowed to re-join. There were indications last night that around half would rather be expelled than toe a party line they consider unacceptable.

A proposal to disband the group was passed "on the nod" following a split last week when 17 out of 36 voting Labour councillors teamed up with Conservative and Liberal Democrats to vote down the party's official candidate for mayor.

It was the last straw for the NEC, which has spent months investigating the group over allegations of dirty tricks, vote-rigging and the disputed formation of an unofficial caucus called the Manifesto Group.

Richard Burningham, Labour's general secretary for Greater London, said the group would be disbanded rather than suspended and would be invited to re-join next week when members would be presented with a declaration re-affirming the party's rules and standing orders.

"If anyone refuses to sign, then they are out, expelled," he said. That could leave the way open for a hung council - something many councillors believe the national Labour party would welcome.

Taking Hackney out of its control would remove a major embarrassment. The group will be re-formed around four officers: Nick Tallentire, the Council Leader, Julie Grimble, the group's secretary, Bill Leadbitter, its chair-

man, and Peter Kenyon, the chief whip.

Mr Burningham confirmed the declaration to abide by party rules would also include points specific to Hackney, points that many of those disbanded may find unpalatable.

"Some draft standing orders have been proposed by Peter Kenyon which included the Labour Party model and some other conditions he considered desirable," said David Phillips, one of the rebels who has been earmarked separately for suspension by the NEC.

"We have said we would want a collegiate debate over whether or not they are reasonable. However, if they are simply going to be imposed as a condition of rejoining, then I think the majority of the group will find that very difficult to stomach."

He said expelled councillors had no intention of forming an opposition group and he described the Manifesto Group as "a myth".

Mr Burningham said there was no question of the declaration being drawn up only by Mr Kenyon.

Mr Tallentire said the NEC's decision vindicated his actions over recent months in his dispute with his fellow councillors.

Blair accused of plot to impose candidates

JOHN RENTOUL
Political Correspondent

Tony Blair, the Labour leader, was accused yesterday of betraying his commitment to "one member, one vote" democracy in the party by planning to impose his favoured candidates in a number of safe seats.

Activists in the 14 safe Labour seats which have not yet chosen candidates fear that the decision by the National Executive Committee (NEC) yesterday to impose a candidate in the new safe seat of Swindon North heralds a series of central decisions.

The NEC rejected demands to re-run the ballot, despite court action by Jim D'Avila, an engineering union convenor who alleged irregularities, and chose Michael Wills, an adviser to Gordon Brown, the shadow Chancellor, who won the initial ballot last September.

Activists fear that Mr Blair is deliberately delaying selections in safe Labour seats in order to invoke powers to suspend membership ballots and appoint candidates on the grounds that a general election is imminent.

David Hill, the party's chief spokesman, said that such fears were unjustified, and that the NEC had declared yesterday that it should "err on the side of balloting local members wherever possible". It had decided that the "internal bitterness and politics" of the

Swindon North party made a fair re-run ballot impossible.

He pointed out that the NEC had taken a different stance yesterday in the case of Glasgow Govan, by ordering a fresh ballot for next month.

Mike Watson, MP for Glasgow Central, won the ballot by just one vote from Mohammed Sarwar, who hopes to become Britain's first Asian Muslim MP. But party bosses decided not to endorse Mr Watson after a report by the electoral specialists Unity Balloting Services found that some people who voted were ineligible.

Mr Blair is believed to be keen to see as MPs in the next Parliament: Alan Howarth, who defected from the Tories last year; Derek Scott, the Labour leader's economic adviser who failed to be selected for Worcester; and Patricia Hewitt, Neil Kinnock's former press secretary, who played a central policy role in Labour's last election campaign.

The NEC has the power to intervene in the selection of candidates if it decides that the party needs to be ready for a general election. Mr Hill said that, in the past, the NEC had usually presented its own shortlist to the local party for balloting - the same procedure as for by-elections. However, he conceded that the NEC had the power, as in Swindon North, to set up a sub-committee simply to appoint a candidate.

Hanging case candidate sacked

JOHN RENTOUL

Labour sacked the party's parliamentary candidate for Exeter yesterday after he failed to fall on his sword as requested over bitter accusations of betrayal in the fight against South African apartheid 30 years ago.

The 194 vote by the National Executive Committee, with no discussion, brought John Lloyd's political career to an abrupt end on the grounds that he had "misled" the party about his role in sending a colleague to the gallows in 1964.

Mr Lloyd, 54, a barrister who fought the seat for Labour at the 1992 election, must have thought the memories of his earlier life as a member of the African Resistance Movement (ARM) were laid to rest.

However, he underestimated the determination of relatives and supporters of John Harris, a fellow-member of the ARM, who was hanged in 1964 for planting a bomb at Johannesburg railway station which killed a woman. Harris was convicted on Mr Lloyd's evidence - something for which he has always expressed remorse.

Tom Sawyer, general secretary of the Labour Party, is understood to feel that Mr Lloyd had not told the truth when it emerged that he could have withdrawn his testimony after he fled to Britain, which might conceivably have saved Harris.

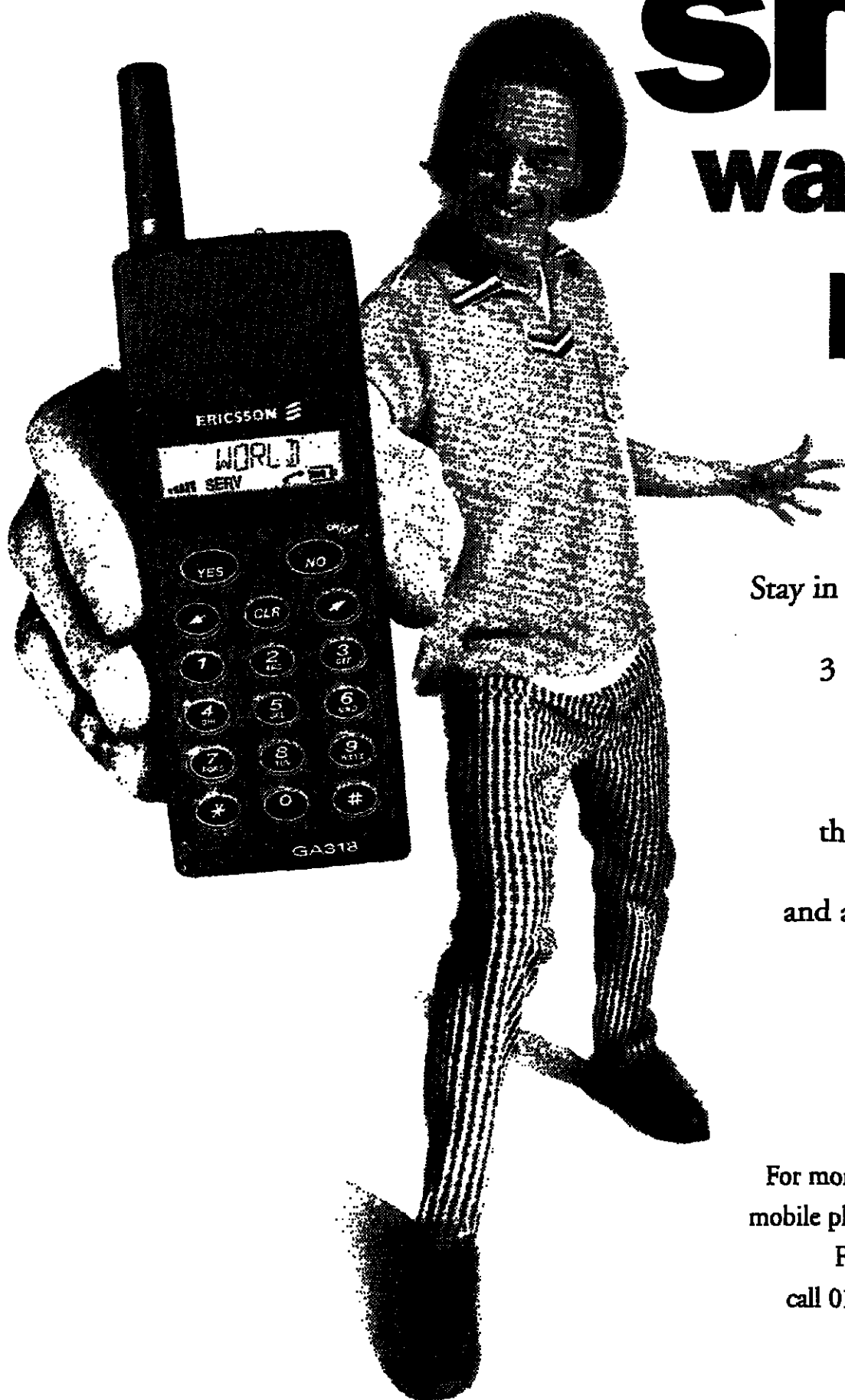
The grievances of anti-apartheid politics have been played in dramatic fashion in the case. Many ARM partisans, including several who served long jail sentences in South Africa in the 1960s, emigrated to Britain.

Exeter Labour Party backed Mr Lloyd in his refusal to stand down after being invited to do so by the NEC in March. Local party members protested outside Labour headquarters in Walworth Road, south London, with proclaiming "John Lloyd - Exeter's choice".

The four voting against the decision were Dennis Skinner, the left-wing MP, Margaret Beckett, industry spokeswoman, Vernon Hince, of the Rail, Maritime and Transport union, and John Evans MP.

A party spokesman said there was no right of appeal and a new candidate would now be selected as quickly as possible.

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JOHN RENTOUL
Political Correspondent

David Hunt, the former Cabinet minister, seized on the damning findings of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC), published yesterday while Mr Lewis was giving evidence to another select committee. Commenting on the PAC report,

Asked about the areas of prison management in which

Mr Lewis told the committee that the chief executives of gov-

"It does not happen in the case of the police or the Bank of England and one of the signs of a mature democracy and sound government is that it can survive and thrive on reasoned public debate."



COLIN BROWN
Chief Political Correspondent

The Prime Minister is being pressed to drop Douglas Hogg, the Minister of Agriculture, Virginia Bottomley, Secretary of State for National Heritage, and the Lord Chancellor, Lord Mackay, whose divorce law reform Bill is threatened by Labour and

He has a reputation for being frank. On the day of the leadership election last July Mr Norris said many MPs saw Mr Major as the "least worst option". He is seen as a hard-hitting minister who could sharpen up the presentation of the Government's record, and help to lead the attack on Labour.

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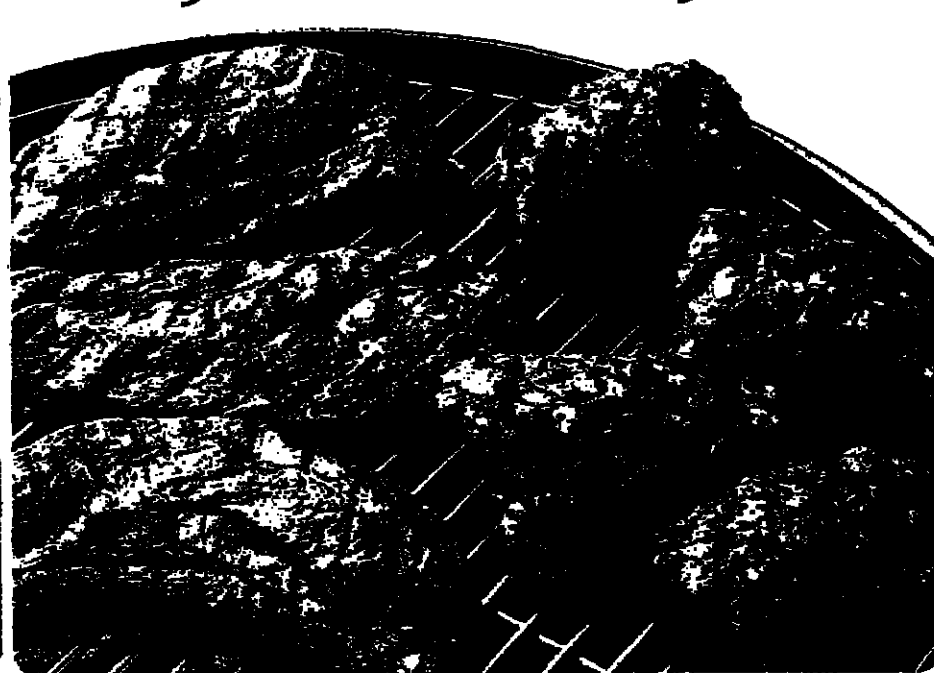


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arts news

edited by David Lister

Literary award: David Malouf wins first presentation of £103,000 laurel for work of fiction with tale of Aboriginal culture

Aboriginal tale wins top book prize

ALAN MURDOCH
Dublin

The inaugural award of the world's most valuable book prize went last night to a novel about a boy forced to adapt to life with a white family after spending 16 years in the care of Aborigines.

The Australian novelist David Malouf won £103,000 for *Remembering Babylon* at the Impac international literary prize ceremony, which took place at Dublin Castle.

As well as being the world's largest prize for a single work of fiction, the Impac breaks new ground in its selection process: the winner was chosen from nominations sent in by municipal libraries around the world.

Malouf, 62, born in Brisbane to Lebanese and English parents, is a former English lecturer at Queensland University. Since 1978 he has been a full-time writer; previous novels include *Johnno*, *An Imaginary Life*, *Harland's Half-Acre* and *The Great World*, which won

the Commonwealth Writers' Prize and the Prix Femina Etranger.

In the 1980s he bought a house in Tuscany, and now divides his time between Sydney and Italy. In 1988 he won Australia's premier literary award, the Pascal Prize. He was short-listed for the Booker Prize in 1993 for *Remembering Babylon*.

The novel is the story of Gemmy Fairley, who, after 16 years living with Aborigines, is taken in as a frightened and barely human youngster by a family in a 19th century Queensland settlement of Scots emigrants. Combining myth and a poetic narrative style, it explores the experience of two alien cultures forced to share the same land.

The Impac award is open to novels published in English between 1992 and 1994, or those in English translation which were first published in their original language from 1990. In all, 125 books were nominated by 108 municipal libraries in 108 countries.

The other shortlisted books were *Ghosts* by John Banville; *A Way in the World* by VS Naipaul; *The Following Story* by Cees Nootboom; *The Laws* by Connie Palmen; *The Gospel According to Jesus Christ* by Jose Saramago; and *Away* by Jane Urquhart.

Malouf who was in Damascus yesterday, will receive his prize at a dinner at Trinity College, Dublin, on 15 June—the eve of the city's annual celebration of James Joyce's *Ulysses*. His latest novel, *Conversations at Carlow Creek*, is published in September.

Eric Lomax won the £25,000 NCR Book Award for non-fiction last night for *The Railway Man*, his account of his experiences as a prisoner of war in Malaya during the Second World War. Lomax, 77, never recovered from the torture he endured at the hands of the Malaysians. His book details his journey back to the scenes of his suffering and the redemptive quality of a meeting with one of his captors 40 years later.

Write stuff: David Malouf, the Australian author and winner of the inaugural Impac award for *Remembering Babylon*

Photograph: Jane Bowen

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Outsiders go to war with the cultural elite

SHUMA RAHA

A cultural divide split old from new in the art world yesterday as the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London lobbied visitors to the Degas exhibition at the National Gallery, exhorting them to "come and see living art at the ICA".

The institute employed sandwich-board protesters to lobby the queues outside the Degas exhibition with the message: "You're Discovered".

Katie Sender, deputy director of the ICA, said last night: "We are very serious about this. We find it very hard to get sponsorship for contemporary arts because we can't always tell the sponsors what is going to appear on the walls, and because what we do is controversial."

"The National Gallery and the Tate have the weight of the establishment behind them. They can command the establishment to come through their doors."

"As far as our public funding goes we get £750,000 a year and the South Bank Centre gets £12m a year." Ms Sender added that one reason for this was "a lack of understanding of the work we do".

The ICA did not seek permission from the National Gallery to send people on to their premises to woo visitors away, but a National Gallery spokeswoman said: "We wouldn't have any comment on what they do in a public space."

"As long as none of our customers complain they are being

harassed it would be inappropriate for us to comment."

An altogether different cultural divide, between East and West, will be bridged today as the Festival of India's South, a celebration of the culture of southern India, starts with a four-day street extravaganza in Covent Garden. The festival, to be held at various venues in London until the end of June, showcases the region's music, dance, drama, films, food and paintings and includes performances by some of its best-known artists.

Asians in general and Indians in particular welcome the festival as an opportunity to put ethnic art on the map. But there were claims that British Asians found such cultural events in this country too ethnocentric. However, "most Asians would respond much more to what's on offer in a festival like this one rather than to British art," according to Jitender Verma, artistic director of Tara Arts, Britain's leading Asian touring theatre company.

"There are a number of Asian arts activities throughout the country," he said. "But the general perception is that they are of minority interest. So leaving aside the Salman Rushdie and the Hanif Kureishi, the mainstream tends to ignore them."

Suman Bhuchar, an Indian journalist and television producer, said: "Though there are a fair amount of performances here... Asian art does not get the kind of promotion... and serious analysis it deserves."

Musicians rock against rave drug

DAVID LISTER

One of the world's leading record companies is to release an album of music intended to wean British youngsters off drugs. The head of MCA Records in London, Nick Phillips, says he now sees it as a duty of the music industry to fight the drug problem.

It signals a dramatic change of attitude not just in the industry but also in the record company MCA, whose roster of artists includes acts with notably extravagant lifestyles - Guns N Roses, Nirvana, Aerosmith and Courtney Love.

The album, *Le Voyage*, by the contemporary Italian composer Gigi D'Agostino consists of melodic tunes which contain slower drum beats than rave or techno music. The theory - actually promulgated by the Italian government as well as musicians - is that this means no drugs are required for clubbers to keep pace with the beat of the music.

Italian health minister Elio Guzzanti said it was "helping to stop the slaughter after clubbing, of young women and men

"murdered" after taking ecstasy. After mixing alcohol and drugs the youth feel great - they get in their cars and drive at high speeds not fully conscious. Fifteen young people died at the weekend, a new slaughter after clubbing."

Peter Pritchard, head of Media records UK, the dance music specialist subsidiary of MCA, who persuaded the parent company to take up the campaign, commented: "In Italy this Mediterranean progressive music represented the beginning of a sea-change away from fast house music and the E [ecstasy] culture it represented, to a slower calmer form of instrumental house that has turned its back on drugs, and endeavours to find a natural high from the music."

Steve Wolfe, director of artists and repertoire at MCA, said: "There has been high-profile moral panic about drug abuse, particularly ecstasy abuse, within teen-club culture in the UK. Mediterranean progressive attempts to move the focus back to the music. It's a 'less drugs, more music' message which can only be a good thing."

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'Weimar Triangle' takes shape for power

France, Germany and Poland are forming a new axis in Europe, writes Sarah Helm

Brussels — Has anybody heard of the Weimar Triangle? "Is it something like the Bermuda Triangle?" asked one British diplomat. "I know. It's an ancient musical instrument written into the score of Beethoven's fifth," teased another.

In King Charles Street they may scoff. But while they do, the Weimar Triangle, Europe's newest power bloc, is beefing up itself — and, once again, Britain is being left out.

In the town of Weimar in 1991 the foreign ministers of Germany, France and Poland gathered to inaugurate a new alliance. Their meeting went almost unnoticed by the rest of Europe, but the foreign ministers of the three have continued to meet annually to devise "a common security concept".

This autumn they are to hold a summit in Poland, meeting for the first time, at the level of heads of government. On the agenda will be security issues including joint military manoeuvres and combating organised crime.

Leading figures in Poland see the alliance as a potential new hard-core for an enlarged Europe, and are keen to promote the influence of the triangle as a means of revitalising European integration. The idea of the triangle — or "axis" as it would more correctly be termed — was dreamt up originally by Hans Dietrich Genscher, the former German foreign minister. The intention, it seems, was to build on the model of Franco-German axis, which had developed as a model of post-war reconciliation.

For Germany, the symbolism was clear: in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union and German reunification, it suddenly made sense to strengthen ties with Poland. Germany sees clear benefits in exercising influence over Poland which it wants to be among the first to join Nato, becoming a buffer on its eastern border. German investments in Poland are today worth \$885m, and 5,000 German companies are operating there. France, not wishing to cede influence to Germany in eastern Europe, has been content to go along with the Weimar Triangle plan.



Power play: Buskers bring an international flavour to Warsaw as Polish leaders look to gain a foothold in Europe

Photograph: Geraint Lewis

For Poland the advantages were clear: new ties with Europe's driving duo meant a big step in from the European periphery towards a taste of power at the centre. It also meant a chance to lobby for early membership of Nato and the European Union.

At a meeting of the Weimar Triangle in France in 1992 Poland won agreement from Germany and France that it should have special association status at the Western European Union, the European arm of Nato. Some figures in Poland today voice grandiose ideas about creating an entire new balance of power in Europe, through which the Weimar Triangle can re-fuel the motor of European integration. "We are not talking about a new architecture for Europe. But the idea is to reinforce a bigger Europe by bringing these three big

powers together as a new column," said Piotr Mowina-Kopka, a leading figure in the right-wing opposition.

The name given to the alliance has unfortunate historical connotations, inevitably recalling, in most European minds, the Weimar Republic between the wars. According to Krzysztof Skubiszewski, the first Polish foreign minister in the Solidarity government, who attended the founding meeting, the choice of Weimar for the first conference was meant to be a positive symbol.

Mr Genscher chose Weimar for the inaugural meeting because it was situated in former East Germany. "I remember the first meeting well. We ate and talked for two days. I don't remember any mention of the fact that this was where the Weimar constitution was adopted, which because of its exceptional pro-

visions provided a basis for Hitler's rise to power," said Mr Skubiszewski, an international lawyer and fellow of All Souls' College, Oxford. "France, Germany and Poland have repeatedly been the area for European aggression and war. For Poland the Weimar Triangle meant new security through a link to the West."

Those left out of this particular "hard core" will be none too pleased if the axis shows signs of growing in influence. Other central and east European countries are jealous that Poland has been favoured. Countries such as Spain and Italy are certain to be affronted should the Poles assert that they have more of a claim to sit at the heart of Europe than they. "It is all verbiage," said one Brussels commentator. "The only hard core in Europe that matters will be those inside the

single currency."

"Typical Polish dreaming," said a Portuguese diplomat. "Why do they think Europe can protect them anyway. Look at our record. They would be better looking to the United States."

The British, meanwhile, watch on, bemused. The French they suspect of having ulterior motives. "France must have some other fish to fry," said one diplomat. As for the Poles: "They do talk about power in a way that suggests they think they are going to use it. But when you ask what economic resources they have they become a bit shy."

It is "impolite" to ask why the Poles should be so friendly with Germans, say the British, given that the Germans are the first to block Polish products at the borders. "Last year the Germans even stopped the import

of Polish plastic gnomes because they were inferior to German plastic gnomes."

Nevertheless, there are signs of pique in London that Britain has not been invited to make the Weimar Triangle a square. After all, there are those — even in the government — who know that it makes sense to be inside new European alliances from the start, just in case they lead somewhere. Germany's eastward ambitions are being particularly carefully observed.

"The Poles need to be careful about who they upset," said a British official. "It is not just the French and the Germans who are helping them. The British have done a lot for the Poles this century. If you ask anybody who are the most important European actors in Nato and the defence field they would say, France and Britain or Britain and France."

international

West will keep force in Bosnia next year

CHRISTOPHER BELLAMY
Defence Correspondent

A significant peace-keeping force is expected to remain in Bosnia after the withdrawal of the peace-implementation force, (I-For) according to senior Defence sources.

The size and composition of the "post I-For" force is as uncertain as its function, but it is expected to include US, British and French troops. That may mean a continued Nato presence. Expectations of a post-I-For force have been played down until now. But it appears that without a continued Western presence everything achieved so far will collapse, and that Britain and the US will stay in Bosnia in some form.

Until now, the US had insisted its troops would leave Bosnia after the year-long I-For mission. Britain was committed to sticking with the Americans under the "one-out-all-out" policy. The US recently said it would delay withdrawal and now appears to have accepted the need for a residual force.

Although I-For's mission has gone well, the sources said they were worried there was no sign of reconciliation between the former warring parties. After almost four years of war, that is not surprising, but they said it made a continued military presence advisable.

When I-For arrived in Bosnia in December, it planned to stay for no more than a year. That would have meant the 60,000-strong force would start withdrawing in September, a bad time, as it would coincide with Bosnia's elections. It is now accepted the withdrawal will not begin until December.

Sources yesterday would not speculate on the size of the follow-on force, although troops in Bosnia believe a force of about 20,000 — one-third of the

present force — could hold the "Zone of Separation" between Serbs and the Muslim-Croat federation.

The presence of foreign troops in Bosnia could become an election issue. Hard-liners, particularly in the Bosnian Serb zone, could use the foreign presence as a vote-winner.

The next milestone in Bosnia is the review conference in Florence on 13-14 June, which will report that I-For's mission has been remarkably successful. In July the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) has to certify that conditions are satisfactory for the elections. These have to take place by 14 September and will be supervised by the OSCE with security provided by I-For.

Maintenance of the peace in Bosnia is seen as dependent on reconstruction. Now that the demanding tasks of securing the 4km-wide "Zone of Separation" is complete, I-For troops are devoting much of their effort to reconstruction.

The sources ruled out any early action to arrest the indicted war criminals, Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic, saying that the consequences if it went wrong, or even if it went right, might be to upset the fragile peace. However, diplomatic sources yesterday said there were "definite signs" that Dr Karadzic might give up the leadership in the next day or so.

The Nato Secretary General, Javier Solana, said the redeployment of I-For troops would make it more difficult for suspected war criminals to move around.

Under the Dayton peace accord, I-For troops are to apprehend any suspected war criminals they come across, but are not required to seek them out. The Defence sources indicated that policy would not change.

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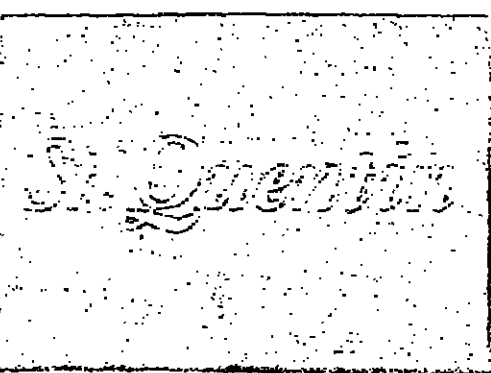
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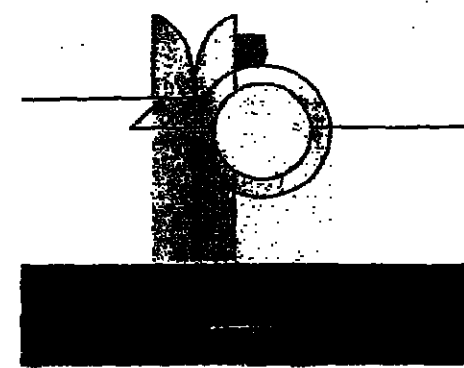


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international

Faith survives Stalin's ravages

Jewish diaspora: Years of repression have given way to revival, writes Helen Womack



Moscow — On the bank of the Moscow River the world's largest Orthodox cathedral, dynamited by Stalin in 1931, has risen from the ashes, or rather the waters of a swimming pool he built on the site. Rebuilding at a phenomenal rate, the restorers have gilded the cupolas, and services will soon be held again in the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour.

In its shadow, on nearby Bolshaya Bronnaya Street, a little peppermint-coloured building has also reverted to the use for which it was intended. The Chabad Lubavitch Synagogue may not be as impressive as the cathedral but, for Jews living in this predominantly Christian country, its restoration is no less of a miracle.

Rabbi Moshe Hazan was murdered by the secret police on the steps of the synagogue in 1939. "They wanted him to say that Soviet culture was sufficient to satisfy the soul," says Rabbi Isaac Kogan, who now leads the community.

"But he would not bow to them. They killed him. And the synagogue was turned into a Soviet culture club. Here in this building they used to plan the May Day demonstrations through Red Square."

In 1988, to mark the 1,000th anniversary of the coming of Christianity to Russia, Mikhail Gorbachev eased the restrictions which the atheist Soviet state had placed on the activities of all religious believers.

The Lubavitch community appealed for the return of their synagogue in 1990 and got it back in 1991, since when they have been restoring it.

Rabbi Kogan takes me on to the women's balcony, from where I can see the men gathering below to celebrate the Sabbath. "The Soviets used this as a theatre," he says, pointing to the temple, beautifully restored with dark wood and stained glass. "And now I must go down and you must stop taking notes."

For the Sun had set on Friday evening. The Sabbath had begun and work must cease. I stand observing the chanting of the prayers.



Leap of faith: Inside a Moscow synagogue. Jews are freer now but are still wary of Russian nationalism

Photograph: Nikolai Ignatiev/Network

Chabad Lubavitch is a Hasidic sect, whose members observe strict kosher rules and still arrange marriages. The men are distinctive in their black hats and long beards and married women wear wigs as a sign of modesty. They believe their last Grand Rabbi, Menachem Schneerson, who died in Brooklyn in 1994, is the Messiah.

Of the world's 14 million Jews, they are a small minority. But in the former Soviet Union the sect is playing a role out of proportion to its size. Liberal Jews in the West were active in trying to help refugees reach Israel in the Communist era. But it is the charismatic Lubavitch, regarded with a degree of suspicion by secular Jews, who are trying to rebuild religious life for the perhaps 1.5 million Jews left in the old empire after the waves of emigration.

Much of their funding comes

from Levi Levayov, a diamond merchant originally from the Central Asian republic of Uzbekistan. They have penetrated to such an extent that in 20 cities of the former Soviet Union the Lubavitch rabbi is the only Jewish presence. Altogether, 40 Lubavitch and 40 Orthodox rabbis work here. There are no permanent representatives of other sects.

The Orthodox synagogue in Moscow operated in Soviet times when the Chabad Lubavitch one was still closed. Just as Christians made greater or smaller compromises with the Communist state, which allowed believers to worship but not spread religion through education or works of charity, so the Jews either found a *modus vivendi* with the authorities or became dissidents.

"Judaism is very flexible but we could never accept the ban on teaching our children He-

brew," says Rabbi Kogan, who chose the dissident path. Formerly an engineer in the atomic submarine yards of what was Leningrad, he was denied exit to Israel for 14 years on grounds he knew state secrets. He became an underground community leader, following in the footsteps of his grandfather, who in the 1950s died of a heart attack in the custody of the NKVD which had arrested him for baking matzo. Only in 1986 did Rabbi Kogan reach Israel.

A small number of Jewish émigrés have returned to Russia, dissatisfied with life in Israel. Rabbi Kogan came back for different reasons. "Israel is my dream, today more than ever before," he says. "It is a real holy land." But Lubavitch elders had other ideas for his career. First they asked him to return to work with child victims of the Chernobyl nuclear accident. Then he took over at the syna-

agogue, which runs a school and engages in charity. The rabbi shows me lists of Moscow pensioners, not exclusively Jews, who receive food parcels from the synagogue.

The rabbi is clearly loved by his congregation. "He's so kind. I'm worried stiff about my sister, who lives on the border with Lebanon, and he's promised to take a letter to her when he travels to Israel," says Yevgenia Gutson, an elderly woman who has only recently begun practising her religion.

"I was afraid to be an active Jew under Communism," she explains. "I could have lost my teaching job in a state primary school. Of course, I never learnt Hebrew. I have to rely on the Russian translations." That fear of the state has gone. Says Rabbi Kogan: "I define anti-Semitism as forbidding a Jew to express himself in a Jewish way. I do not see that here any

more. After decades of spiritual hunger, there is real religious freedom in Russia. Of course, some Jews are still unhappy but if they are leaving now, it is for economic reasons."

He admits, however, there have been attacks on the synagogue, including a fire bomb in 1993 which burnt his bedroom, by "nationalist hooligans who are clearly a minority of the population. Freedom is a two-sided coin. If we have freedom, then the hooligans have it too".

Extreme Russian nationalists identify strongly with the Orthodox Church, even if the hierarchy distances itself from them. The rebuilding of Christ the Saviour Cathedral has been controversial, with many Muscovites saying the money would have been better spent on social welfare. Some liberals fear the opening of the cathedral could encourage dark, chauvinist elements of society.

Arab-Israelis hold key to Labour power

PATRICK COCKBURN
Umm al Fahm, Israel

In a house between two mosques in the Arab hill town of Umm al-Fahm in northern Israel, Jamal, a nurse, is trying to decide how to vote next week. His decision is of acute interest to the Israeli government which needs the support of the Israeli-Arabs if it is to stay in power.

Jamal says that in Umm al-Fahm, a town of 30,000 people, there is "a lot of anger about the Israeli attack on Lebanon. Many people will stay at home." On the other hand "if people do not go to vote then they will au-

shunned and marginalised by Israeli Jewish parties.

At first the ruling Labour party took Israeli-Arabs for granted in the election campaign. The Labour party programme was not even printed in Arabic, though Arabs are 12 per cent of the electorate. Marwan Darwish, a Palestinian political scientist, says this changed after Lebanon. He says: "The Labour party was in an absolute panic. Their activists went from Galilee to the Negev, giving promises of money for development."

It is a good moment to be a wild card in Israeli politics. Suddenly Israeli-Arabs, Russian immigrants and ultra-orthodox Jews are being wooed as never before. Mr Peres himself was in Umm al-Fahm last night, trying to win last minute votes by pledging to remedy grievances. The polls give him a five per cent lead over Mr Netanyahu but an internal Labour party study has reportedly concluded they are dead even.

Israeli-Arabs are in an ambiguous position. Sympathising with the national demands of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza it is their own interest to insist on equality of political, civil and economic rights with Jewish Israelis. Even Sheikh Nimer Abdullah Darwish, the leader of the Islamic movement, recognised this year that it is unrealistic to stay outside the Israeli political system.

The prime motive of the Islamists to enter the election was to avoid an Israeli crackdown in the wake of the suicide bombings. The deputy mayor of Umm al-Fahm is still under arrest, accused of running a charity which helped the families of Hamas members. At the same time Islamists are distancing themselves further from Yasser Arafat, whose Israeli-Arab adviser, Ahmed Tibi, was forced to withdraw from the election last week for lack of support.

Nobody expected that direct election for the prime minister would benefit the Israeli-Arabs, but it is. In future they will be too important a building block of any Labour bid for the prime minister's office to be disregarded.



Honoured: Arafat receiving a degree in Greece yesterday

tomatically be helping Bibi Netanyahu (the right wing Likud candidate)."

He thought he would vote for Shimon Peres, the Prime Minister, but he was not sure. Events in Lebanon were important but "what we want is equality with the Jewish population". Most of the Arabs in Umm al-Fahm are labourers working in Tel Aviv and Jamal wanted a decent bus system, better schools and industry close to the town.

These are the perennial complaints of the 850,000 Israeli-Arabs, but in the last week the government has been listening to them closely. For the first time the Israeli Prime Minister is being elected directly in polls later this month and this has unexpectedly strengthened the leverage of Israeli-Arab voters, whose representatives in the Knesset (parliament) were

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Germans face new wave of strike disruption

IMRE KARACS
Bonn

Like punch-drunk boxers after a long fight, union bosses and representatives of the German government squared up yesterday for the fourth and decisive round of a confrontation that has wrought havoc in the last three days.

In Stuttgart, where leaders of public employees' trade unions sat down with government officials for what promised to be a long night of beer and *Bratwurst*, 3,000 noisy activists provided the guard of honour. "Hands off sick pay," their most militant banners implored, shunning the union's forlorn demand for a 4.5 per cent pay rise.

Whether the workers will settle for the nought per cent for the next two years offered by the government will depend on their ability to badger the authorities into submission, with the biggest wave of public-sector strikes in four years.

On yesterday's evidence they have a long way to go. Rubbish

rotted in front of houses unaffected earlier in the week. More than 5 million letters were left uncollected as postal workers struck in eight cities. In Hamburg, refuse workers blocked entrances to the city's port.

But in Berlin, a five-hour strike on the city's underground trains and buses failed to bring rush-hour traffic to a halt. Commuters took to the one service running normally, the rickety but super-efficient S-Bahn, run by the national railway company, and were only slightly delayed. "I was busier than usual, but not as busy as I had expected," complained a Berlin taxi driver.

But the government is aware that these are only "warning strikes". The two sides are at an impasse, and only when talks break down irrevocably can the unions mobilise all their members, as happened in 1992, when public employees stayed at home for 11 days.

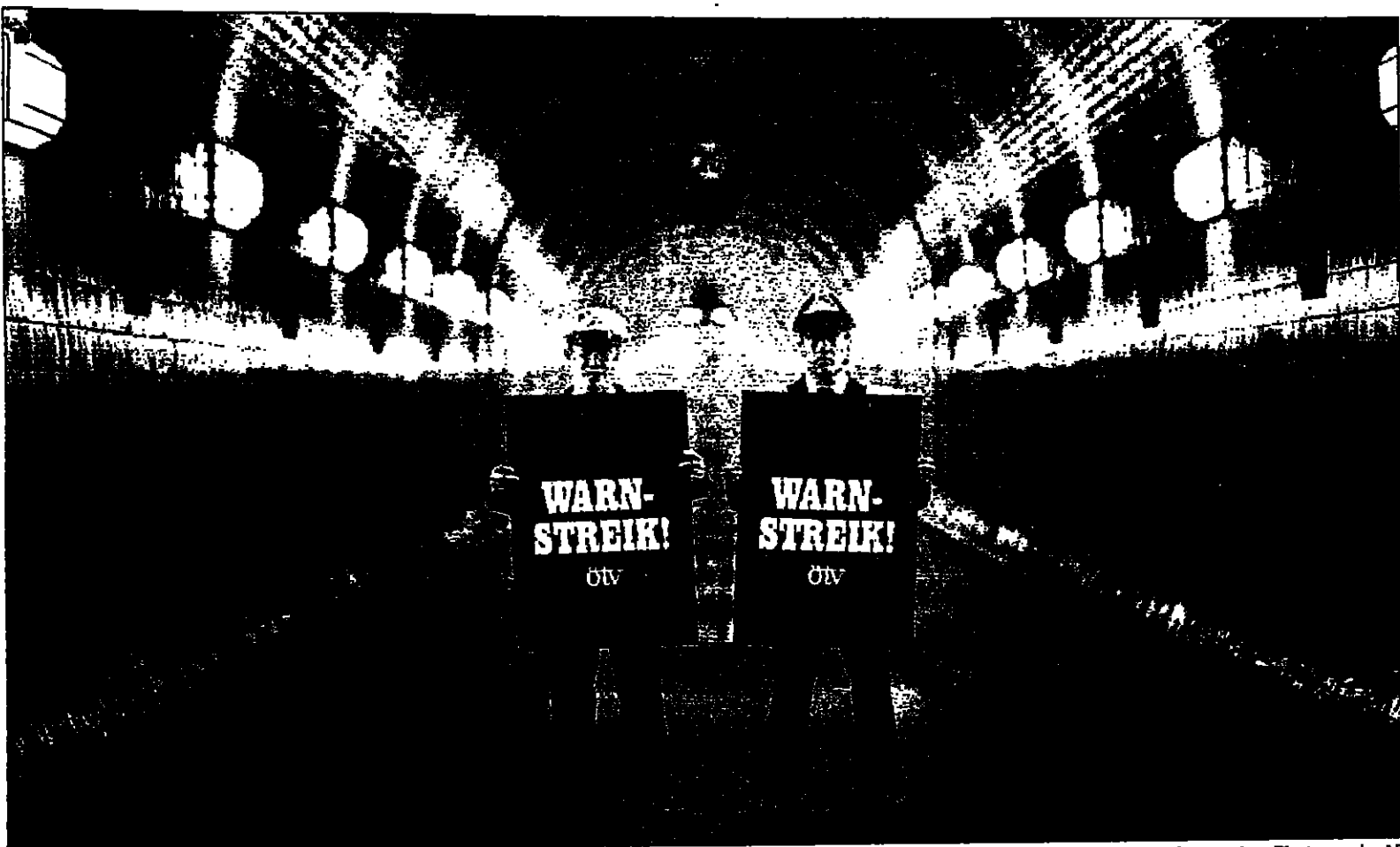
Union leaders, on the other hand, cannot be certain that

they can deliver the same degree of militancy in today's climate of recession. Some 200,000 people have lost their jobs in the public sector in the past four years, and another 200,000 will be receiving redundancy notices between now and 1998.

Herbert Mai, leader of the Public Services and Transport Union, OTV, gave little away as he entered the room yesterday, but his organisation seemed to be back-peddalling. The government's austerity programme is committed to no pay rise for public employees, so the union leaders have banished all numbers from their vocabulary.

Mr Mai has shifted his focus to other elements in the government package: a 20-per cent cut in sick pay and an extension of working hours.

Currently, public employees work a 38.5-hour week in the west, and 40 hours in eastern Germany. The search is on for a fudge that costs the budget nothing, but can be sold to Mr Mai's members as a victory. If it is not found, Germany is



Striking a pose: A Hamburg harbour employee, with a poster reading 'Token strike today,' blocks a tunnel leading into the port Photograph: AP

Australians fight over Queen's role in Olympics

ROBERT MILLIKEN
Sydney

Even before the Atlanta Olympic Games begin in July, Australians have begun to row over the Queen's role when they host the Olympics in Sydney four years later. The question of whether the Queen should or should not open the 2000 Olympics has reignited the country's republic debate after the election two months ago of the anti-republican John Howard as Prime Minister of the conservative coalition government.

John Coates, president of the Australian Olympic Committee, touched a republican nerve when he said that the Queen should open the Sydney Olympics, according to the Olympic Charter, which states that the head of state of the host country should perform that role. "In my mind that's the Queen, if available," he said.

Republican Australians, a comfortable majority of the voting public, according to opinion polls, have condemned such a proposal. They want Mr Howard to advise the Queen to forego her constitutional role and allow an Australian public figure, either the Governor-General or the Prime Minister, to do the job.

They say if the Queen attends Australia would lose its dignity and be seen around the world as a British colony on the eve of the centenary of the country's federation in 2001.

Peter Fitzsimons, a leading sports commentator, wrote in the *Sydney Morning Herald*: "Stone the crows and tie our kangaroo down, sport! It's just

not ... With due respect to Mr Coates, and indeed to Her Majesty, the thought of her opening our Olympics is simply unthinkable, the most unheard of thing most of us have ever heard of." The same newspaper called for the Olympic rules to be "adjusted in response to a specific local difficulty" if there was no way around having the Queen open the Games.

Rather than snuffing out republicanism, Mr Howard's election victory in March appears to have lulled it into a temporary sleep. Mr Howard at first opposed the republican debate which Paul Keating, his Labor Party predecessor, inspired. But he has promised to hold a constitutional convention next year, followed by a popular referendum, if the convention reaches a consensus on change to a republic.

The Duke of Edinburgh opened the last Olympics in Australia, in Melbourne in 1956. The Queen opened those in Montreal in 1976, the last time they were held in a Commonwealth country. It is likely that as the millennium approaches, together with a drum-beating of Australian nationalism around the 2001 centenary, the Queen may have to contend with popular sentiment that she stay away.

If anything, Mr Keating's departure from politics has helped the republicanism cause. Many of his opponents, who are sympathetic to republicanism, opposed it under Mr Keating because of what they saw as his demagogic style. Mr Howard's convention next year may usher in change sooner than Labor could have managed.

Strasbourg court to rule on names

IAN PHILLIPS
Paris

What's in a name? An awful lot if you ask Frenchman Gérard Guillot, who is the first person to bring a case before the European Court of Human Rights to gain the right to give his daughter the Christian name of his choice.

"It's absurd and intolerable," he said. "My daughter is 13 and for the past 18 years, I have been fighting for her Christian name to be accepted."

Ever since her birth his second daughter has officially had three dots as a first name. The trouble started a few hours after she was born on 7 April 1983 when he went to register her birth at the local town hall in the chic Parisian suburb of Neuilly-sur-Seine.

He had rather unusually decided to call his daughter Fleur de Marie (Flower of Mary) after the heroine of *Mystères de Paris*, a novel by the popular 19th-century writer Eugène Sue. But his suggestion was met with a categorical "non" from the civic authorities.

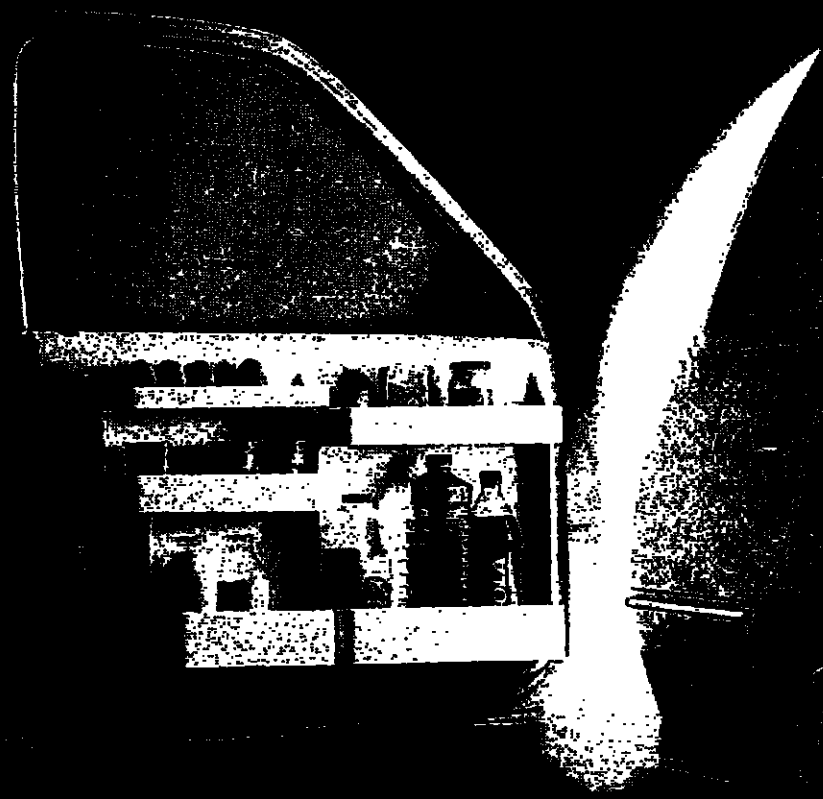
At that time French law dictated that the only names which

could be given to offspring were those which featured on the calendar of saints or those of characters from ancient history. Thus the likes of Pacôme Médard Thède or even Nabuchodonosor would have not posed a problem, but as no Fleur de Marie has ever been canonised, or has participated in the Trojan War, the name was a definite no-no. The law changed in January 1993 and French parents can now call their children what they like. However, the registrar still has the right to alert a public prosecutor if he feels the name is contrary to the child's interest.

"The registrar was just being narrow minded," claims Monsieur Guillot. "In thousands of other places Fleur de Marie would have posed no problem." Thus in 1984 he referred the affair to the French high court which refused to allow the use of "de" and suggested he simply called his daughter "Fleur-Marie".

But just as a rose by any other name would not smell as sweet, Fleur-Marie lacks sweetness to Monsieur Guillot's ears. "It no longer has any beauty," he said.

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international

Kashmiri voters set to 'stay away in anger'

TIM MCGIRK
Kokarnag, Kashmir

"The militants are pointing a gun at our heads and telling us not to vote or they'll kill us. The Indians are pointing an even bigger gun at our heads and telling us to vote - or else. What do we do?" asked an anguished Kashmiri policeman in Kokarnag, a village on the edge of the Himalayan forests. "I guess we listen to the man with the bigger gun."

This is democracy in India's troubled state of Kashmir, where Muslim separatists have vowed to kill anyone who votes today, and Indian security forces, all 400,000 of them, are using threats and harassment to drive Kashmiris to the polling booth for elections that nobody here wants.

A village of pastures and willow trees, Kokarnag has perhaps 2,000 registered voters. Now, Kokarnag has two soldiers for every voter. The Indian authorities insist it takes that much force to keep away the insurgents, since Kokarnag lies close to one of the forest routes

used by the rebels and is a likely target for election sabotage.

But the people of Kokarnag and other villages in southern Kashmir said that the soldiers are there for another reason: to bully them into casting their votes. As one hospital orderly in Kokarnag said: "Yesterday the soldiers came to our houses and took our identification cards. They will use these ID cards to rig the results at the polling stations."

An extra 100,000 soldiers and police have been sent to the Kashmir valley, according to Kashmir officials. Smothered by such firepower, the Muslim militants so far have been unable to carry out their threats. Unable to strike in Kashmir, the insurgents may have fixed their sights instead on the Indian capital, New Delhi. An explosion, believed to have been from a car bomb, went off in a crowded marketplace on Monday, killing at least 24 people.

A Kashmir separatist group claimed responsibility for the blast, and authorities suspect the same group may have planted a bomb on a tourist coach yesterday that left Agra, site of the Taj Mahal. Police said at least 15 people died and another 30 passengers were seriously injured when the coach exploded.



Separatist bomb: Police sift through the wreckage of Tuesday's blast in New Delhi in which 14 died Photograph: Reuters

For nearly seven years, Kashmir has been torn apart by a

Muslim separatist revolt. Throughout the uprising, the Himalayan state has remained under New Delhi's direct control without elected representatives. Past attempts to hold elections were always post-

poned: the majority of Kashmiris are Muslim and their support for the various insurgent groups was too widespread. But with over 20,000 people left dead, and the militant groups split by treachery and

different goals (some want to unite with Pakistan, others want independence), the Indian forces have nearly beaten the Kashmiris into submission. It was deemed safe enough to hold elections, and Indian authorities

needed a high turn-out to prove that once-wayward Kashmiris are now content with Indian rule. If polling today is fair, insist Kashmiris, nearly all voters will stay away in anger.

The Indians do not care who the Kashmiris vote for as long as they vote. Nor are the Indians unduly concerned how the 52 candidates running for three parliamentary seats lure out the voters. Several candidates belong to Kashmir counter-insurgency groups, called "renegades" here, which are supported by the Indian army. The renegades' idea of free and fair campaigning is to hold up 15 or so coaches on the highway at gunpoint and force the passengers to attend their rallies.

Despite such coercion, most Kashmiris run the other way when a candidate comes by. Contesting politicians are likely to arrive in a bullet-proof car accompanied by a motorcade of 20 jeeps stuffed with troops. In Gunderwal, a village by the Sindh river where people pride themselves on their rose gardens, a student said: "When we heard that one of the renegades

was staging a rally here, many people fled into the fields."

The most notorious renegade, Kukka Parry, is not standing for election himself. Throughout the rise and fall of the Muslim militancy, Parry has undergone startling transformations. A folk-singer popular at weddings, Parry gave up his microphone for an AK-47 and joined a pro-Pakistan insurgent group. After a feud, he set up a counter-insurgency group, backed by the Indians, and hunted down his former comrades.

Parry has done much damage to the Muslim insurgents. Not surprisingly, they want to kill him. Parry's deputy commander, Javed Shah, is running as MP for Srinagar, the Kashmir capital, and may win.

Indian authorities seem to forget that the uprising in Kashmir began in 1989 in protest against elections which New Delhi tried to rig. These polls, which most Kashmiris would boycott if they were given the liberty to do so, will only quicken their resentment against India.

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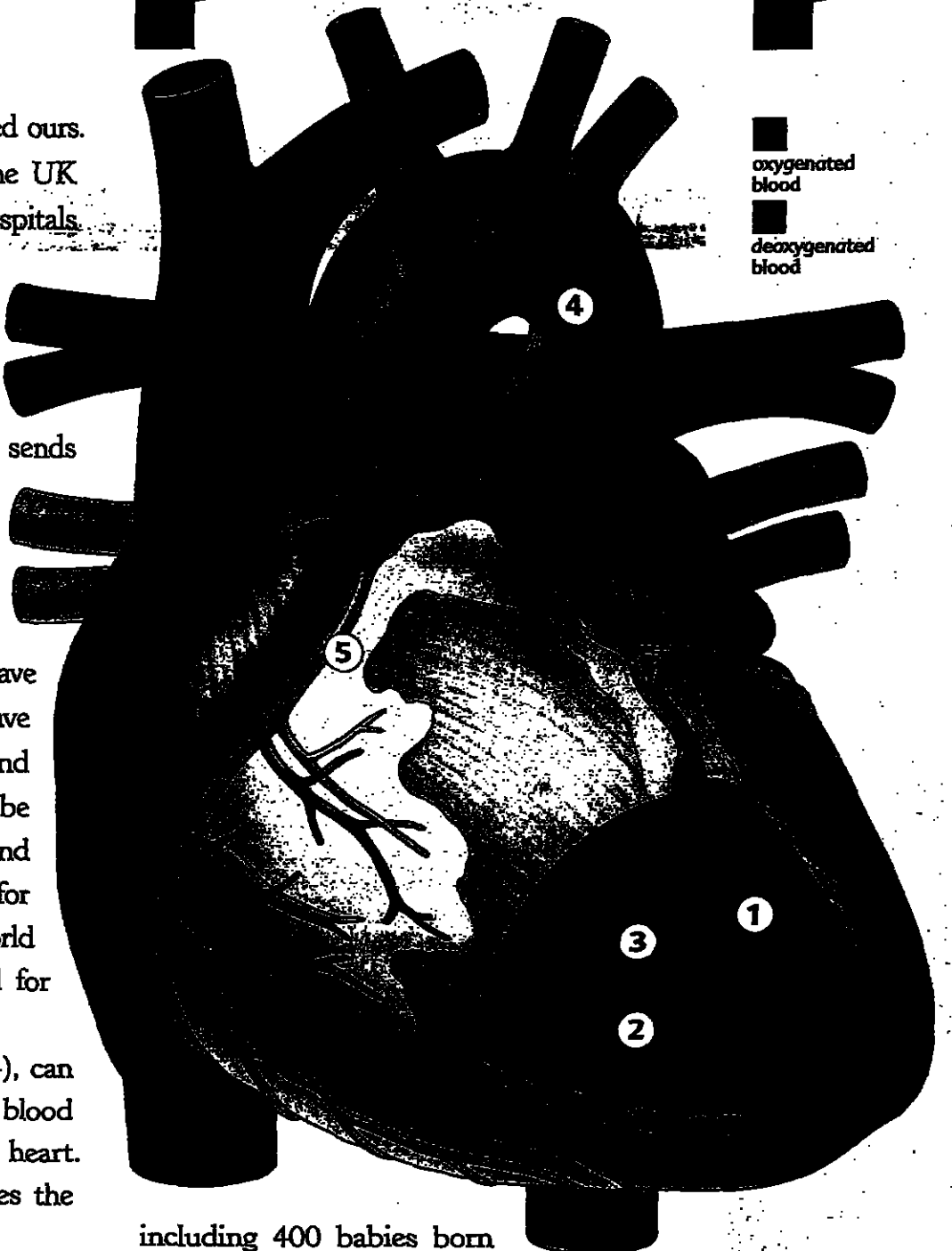
A hole in the heart (3), and the arterial duct (4), can now be closed by inserting a tiny 'umbrella' into a blood vessel in the groin and then moving it up to the heart. When it reaches the right position, a trigger releases the umbrella which then closes the hole.

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SHORTS

CHINA - Chinese leaders have been criticised for their handling of the Tiananmen Square protests. The government's response is seen as a failure to address the demands for reform and democracy.

INDIA - The Indian government has announced a new policy of non-alignment. This move is seen as a response to the changing global landscape and a desire to maintain India's independence.

RUSSIA - The Russian government has announced a new policy of non-alignment. This move is seen as a response to the changing global landscape and a desire to maintain Russia's independence.

UK - The UK government has announced a new policy of non-alignment. This move is seen as a response to the changing global landscape and a desire to maintain the UK's independence.

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China takes a dim view of British exports

TERESA POOLE
Peking

Asked to name some British-made products, Chen Dongming, a researcher at the China Religious Research Institute, pondered for a while. "Scotch whisky and British Airways," he suggested. "British products are not as popular as the Japanese or American stuff. But if you ask me about British poets and dramatists, I can name a lot," he added.

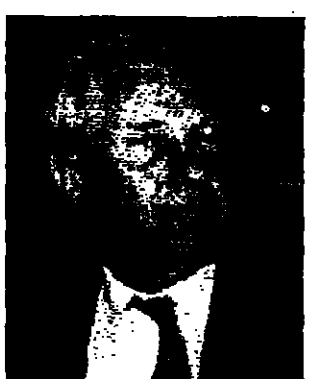
As the Deputy Prime Minister, Michael Heseltine, left Peking for Shanghai yesterday, leading more than 270 British businessmen on the next stage of his trade mission, the consciousness of the ordinary Chinese shopper about British products and companies in China left some room for improvement. All the Chinese could name was Wall's, whose Cornish tarts have been selling well for two years. But everyone thought the company was American.

A barber shop owner named Rothmans cigarettes, whisky and Rolls Royce. He added: "On television, in the British films, I saw that the British cinema is quite beautiful. But there are not many British products in the Chinese market. Maybe that is because British businessmen are not interested in the Chinese market, or they are not as competitive as the Japanese, American or French businessmen."

Mr Heseltine, wrapping up the first hectic leg of his mission, would disagree. As he has repeatedly stressed this week, Britain remains by far the biggest European direct investor in China with cumulative investment totalling \$2.2bn (£1.4bn) by the end of last year. Less impressive is the trade performance: in 1995, Britain's trade deficit with China widened as UK exports slipped 2.4 per cent to £824m. The Chinese market presented "incredible potential" for British businesses, and British companies were well-poised to take a fair share of that business,

Mr Heseltine said yesterday, describing China as "an immensely sophisticated country in the development of its policies". The only thing missing in the presentation was anything that resembled a new big contract. The largest signing so far during the mission has been a \$80m pesticides joint venture by Zeneca.

Overall, however, Sino-British relations appeared this week to pass through a staging post. "Diplomatic relations between



Heseltine: 'Focus has been on commercial matters'

China and Britain have recovered from disputes over Hong Kong's future," pronounced the official China Daily. And the Chinese Prime Minister, Li Peng, who met Mr Heseltine on Tuesday, said bilateral relations were expected to "take a big step forward", especially business relations.

The question yesterday was, at what price? Mr Heseltine was on the defensive about why such a senior politician was leading a trade mission, and whether it would not be better for him to concentrate on politics, given the seemingly intractable difficulties in safeguarding future political freedoms in Hong Kong.

"The idea that you can stand back as a minister in a government and not support your companies would display a degree of naivety which would be absent in every other country in the world," he said. "The dialogue which takes place here

about major contracts takes place with the government of China. The whole machinery about approvals of decision-making is a political decision-making process."

Nevertheless, subjects such as human rights and the disagreements over Hong Kong have so far been given a much lower billing than business, and the Deputy Prime Minister admitted "the major focus has been on commercial matters".

There was a time when any senior foreign government official visiting China would make a point of stressing how the question of human rights had been raised with Chinese leaders. Yesterday, Mr Heseltine did not even mention raising human rights issues with Mr Li, despite the violent crackdown on photographs of the Dalai Lama in Tibet. Asked earlier in the week if he would raise Tibet, he said: "I have private conversations with the leaders of the Chinese government, and I will maintain that confidentiality." British officials were not even allowed to confirm whether or not human rights had been raised in any form with Mr Li.

Mr Heseltine was similarly unforthcoming on discussions about Hong Kong and China's plans to scrap the elected Legislative Council (Legco) the moment sovereignty reverts to China on 1 July next year. "We have to work to deal with that issue," he said, asked about the unselected provisional Legco which Peking will install instead. There was little talk of specifics. "Both sides have agreed on the need to strengthen our co-operation over Hong Kong in the remaining year before the transfer of sovereignty to China," he insisted.

Mr Heseltine will meet President Jiang Zemin in Zhuhai at the end of the week, and have a final stop in Hong Kong where 6 million people will be eager to hear if he has wrung any concessions out of the mainland government about their political future.

England in Peking, page 32

Bulgaria prepares for royalty



A man in Sofia carries a portrait of King Simeon past a wall plastered with welcoming posters. Simeon arrives in the capital on Saturday after 50 years' exile; crowds are expected of people who only know him from photographs and TV images

TIRANA NIGHTS

First Mozart is a tough act for Beggars' opera

One thing about the Tirana Opera: as cultural experiences go, it is one of the world's great bargains. Tickets for three hours of live music and singing normally cost 50 lek, less than the price of this newspaper and a sup even by Albanian standards: for the same money you could buy just two cups of coffee in a pavement café.

Then again, it's not Covent Garden. You won't find too many mentions of the Teatro d'Opera d'Albania in Kobbe's guide. Fifty years of isolationism and Stalinist dictatorship did not keep Albanians within the fold of mainstream operatic tradition, and until a few years ago you would probably have found nothing but peasants to the Albanian proletariat, which only schoolchildren and students on compulsory trips would attend.

These days the opera has bags of enthusiasm and raw talent, but few resources. The state provides only \$250,000 (£160,000) a year, and artists have to scrape by on salaries no higher than \$90 a month; many have second jobs in Tirana's bars and restaurants, and the most talented take up offers to work abroad.

Operatic scores have to be begged, stolen or borrowed from travelling friends, and then photocopied for each member of the cast. Costumes are home-made and sets cobbled together from bits of spare joinery picked up from Tirana's booming construction trade.

The opera house is inside the Palace of Congress, a fine monument to Socialist-Realist architecture on Tirana's main square. But in these consumeristic times it has to share the space with a neon-lit poker salon and a slot-machine parlour.

Despite the adversities, the opera company has worked hard to expand its repertoire, starting with the only two foreign works ever performed under the old system, *La Traviata* and *La Bohème*, and slowly adding further popular classics by Rossini, Verdi, Puccini and Bizet, always performed in the original language.

Then, a few nights ago, the opera house staged a remarkable, if largely unnoticed event: the first production of a Mozart opera on Albanian soil. Inevitably, this was not a regular *Don Giovanni*. The scene in the cemetery when the statue of the murdered commondatore accepts Don Giovanni's dinner invitation was played without the statue; instead, the audience was invited to use its imagination as the singers put on frightened expressions and stared into the middle distance.

At the end, the earth failed to swallow up the unrepentant Don Giovanni and consign him to hell. The Don merely lifted up a large white sheet which had previously served as his tablecloth at dinner (creating a large cloud of dust as he did so), twirled around with a ballerina and then keeled over and died.

Musically, this was the most ambitious thing the Tirana Opera had ever done, and it would not have been possible without the help of the Austrian government, which provided \$80,000 in sponsorship, the director, conductor and a handful of singers. The opera closed its doors for a whole month to prepare, and charged four times the usual price.

The orchestra remained a bit thin, around 45 players compared to the 80 or 90 in a normal opera house, and there was no harpsichord for the continuo, just an out-of-tune grand piano. Neither Don Ottavio nor Donna Anna were quite up to their difficult virtuoso arias. The voice of Don Giovanni lacked the brooding quality which gives the opera its depth.

Still, it was a spirited performance, with the popular local bass Artan Lika as Leporello and a fine array of traditional Albanian costumes in the country dancing scenes.

In his list of Don Giovanni's female conquests, Leporello managed to dig up 231 Albanians that Mozart and his librettist, Lorenzo da Ponte, somehow overlooked.

Andrew Gumbel

French troops set to defend democracy

Paris (Reuters) — France yesterday ordered its troops in the Central African Republic to protect the elected government of President Ange-Félix Patasse against army mutineers.

LCI television, in a report telephoned from Bangui, said two French Mirage fighters armed with rockets had taken off from a nearby air base. Combat helicopters were also involved and at least one of them had opened fire. The official said about 100 special forces commandos were flown in from France. LCI said about 100 heavily-armed French soldiers had left the Bangui airbase.

The state radio, with the presidential palace and parliament, was among the few strategic places in Bangui still under government control.

They were defended by loyalist troops and French soldiers with tanks, local residents said. In a report from Bangui, France-Info radio said the rebels had claimed they would be in control of all of the city by the evening.

"The mission is to maintain the democratic state," Co-operation Minister Jacques Godfrain said. "That means freedom of movement and freedom of expression."

He added that Paris had received strong support from neighbouring African states.

The heads of state of neighbouring African countries have expressed strong solidarity with one of their colleagues (President Patasse) who was democratically elected, and strong support for what France is doing.

The Minister added that French troops had been deployed to protect the state radio station in Bangui "to prevent it being taken by force" by the mutineers, whose five-day-old revolt spread after negotiations with the President broke down. A Defence Ministry official also said heavy shooting resumed around the radio station after the talks between the government and rebels had failed.

"We are intervening against this attack," he said. A French military helicopter was also reported to have fired on army mutineers near the state radio station in Bangui and several rebels were killed.

"I saw the French helicopter firing at the mutineers near the national radio," a correspondent for BBC radio reported an Africa service programme. A politician with close contacts

among rebels said nine mutineers died in the clash. France would, he said, repatriate all foreign nationals who wished to flee the country, prompted by looting and street violence.

The second evacuation flight from Bangui was due to arrive in Paris early this morning.



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Torture: Amnesty International says that the practice is more widespread than ever. It targets five regimes in its latest report

A glimpse of Hell in the cells of horror

TONY BARBER

For those who have faith in human progress, it makes grim reading to go through the new Amnesty International study, published yesterday, on the worldwide practice of torture. It concludes that, since it issued its first such reports in 1973 and 1984, "most of the countries implicated in these books are still actively torturing their citizens: and a few more countries have been added to the list."

The forms of torture in use across the world are cruel almost beyond belief. A Burmese punishment known as "the helicopter" involves suspending the victim by the wrists or ankles from a rotating ceiling fan and inflicting blows as the victim spins round.

The "pig position" in Bolivia requires the handcuffed prisoner to be bent over backwards until his or her head is on the ground and pushed against a wall as the beatings rain down.

Such is only a random sample of methods and instruments employed by government security agencies and police forces from Serbia to Indonesia, from Iraq to Sri Lanka, from Haiti to Papua New Guinea. In all, Amnesty estimates torture has

reached "epidemic proportions" in more than 40 countries, and says outbreaks have been reported in 60 others.

In launching its latest campaign for the abolition of torture, Amnesty is concentrating on five countries: China, Israel, Kenya, Mexico and Turkey, and on this page we summarise conditions in each state.

It has chosen them not necessarily because they are the most flagrant abusers of human rights but because each is in a different continent or region, reinforcing the perception that torture is a worldwide evil.

It is worldwide in a technological and commercial sense, too. Amnesty presents evidence that many Western companies, including some in Britain, have sought markets abroad for their shackles, thumbcuffs, electric shock batons, stun guns and other sophisticated products for abusing the human person.

Worldwide torture is not about to stop tomorrow. But better enforcement of the regulations governing exports of equipment open to misuse would be a good start.

'A Glimpse of Hell' is available at £12.99 from Amnesty International UK, 99-119 Rosebery Avenue, London EC1R 4RE



Hitting back: Women at last year's International conference in Peking protesting about China's human rights record

Photograph: AP

Violations common across the board

Peking - Wang Jingbo, 33, died after being held at Chaoyang District Public Security Detention Centre, central Peking, at the end of last year.

The death certificate given his parents gave the cause as cerebral bleeding but the autopsy showed he also had 12 broken ribs. His family were convinced he was beaten to death. In March the head of the detention centre told Wang's family he had died of pneumonia and

of beatings by other prisoners. The death in custody was not unusual but the details were, unusually made available when Wang's parents provided information to foreign journalists as part of their campaign for an independent investigation.

In a country with an all-powerful security apparatus, and no independent judicial process, torture and ill-treatment of prisoners is widespread and, according to Amnesty, systematic.

The torturers are rarely called to account. No statistics are published on deaths in custody, and there are few reliable indications of the real scale of the problem. In October 1993, the *Henan Legal Daily* said that in that province 41 prisoners and "innocent suspects" had died as a result of torture during interrogation between 1990 and 1992, reported Amnesty.

Torture methods that were mentioned by the official newspaper included victims being tied up, scalded with boiling water, hit with bottles, burned with cigarettes, lashed with belts, or having electric prods placed on their genitals. Political prisoners who have been released from jail and subsequently left China have substantiated the reported ill-treatment, including years in solitary confinement.

Violations take place across the board, from the arresting police station, to detention centres and labour camps and jails. China ratified the UN Convention against Torture seven years ago, but, despite the central government's attempts to stop such incidents, the public security and prison authorities still operate without any outside controls.

Teresa Poole

Police act with total impunity

KENYA

Nairobi - Torture of political prisoners and criminal suspects is routine in Kenya, Amnesty said, accusing the police of using a variety of techniques to extract "confessions".

"Common methods include beatings and whipping... particularly the feet. Detainees are often made to crouch while a stick is passed behind their knees and in front of their elbows. Their wrists are then chained together and they are suspended upside down and beaten on the soles of their feet. Some political prisoners have had fingernails pulled out. Rape by the security forces is widespread." The report details the case of the lawyer Raphael Wang'ondu Kariuki, accused of belonging to an illegal guerrilla organisation. He was beaten for four days until he signed a fictitious statement. He was eventually bailed after pleading not guilty to the charge in court.

"Torture has become almost acceptable among the security services," said Maima Kiai, of the Kenya Human Rights Commission. "The police do not investigate by using forensic means, they use pure, brutal strength to beat people. Not a single policeman has ever been charged and the government fails to take a firm stand against torture."

Ling Kitui, who treats victims, says torture is used not only to secure confessions but to spread fear in the community.

David Orr

Rape seen as a police perk

Demetrio Hernandez, 34, a union activist, was bundled into a car in Mexico City by 10 armed men in civilian clothes on October 20, 1994. They turned out to be federal policemen, who accused him of being in an armed leftist group sympathetic to the Zapatista guerrillas in the state of Chiapas.

Hooded, he was driven to an unknown destination. After refusing to confess, he was stripped naked, hung from the ceiling by his thumbs and prodded with sharp objects. Then came electric shocks, administered to the toes, shins, knees, testicles, penis, navel, backs of

the hands, the tongue, gums and teeth, the elbows, forehead, earlobes, nostrils and neck. While his torturers threatened to kill his family, Mr Hernandez had a bag put over his head; it was removed when he could barely breathe. Next, water with powdered chili was forced up his nostrils, after which his head was held down a lavatory bowl. Mr Hernandez, who told Amnesty of his ordeal, was freed six months later without charges; his torturers were never brought to justice. Mexicans had no trouble believing the story and few were shocked in a nation where, as yesterday's report stated, "torture has reached epidemic proportions". The poor are the most common victims: Indians, peasants and particularly women. The rape of women, who are legally helpless, has long been seen as something of a perk for the country's generally uneducated policemen.

Mexicans had no trouble be-

President Ernesto Zedillo has pledged to end torture but Amnesty's last report on Mexico, last year, said the problem had worsened during his term.

Phil Davison

'No light at end of tunnel'

Istanbul - Western diplomats believe the number of people being tortured and "disappearing" in Turkey has been decreasing and that affairs have improved since the early 1980s.

But Akin Birdal, head of the Human Rights Association, refused to see light at the end of the tunnel. "There is no sign things are getting better. In fact, they are getting worse. People in charge of atrocities are being rewarded by seats in parliament and even ministries," said Mr Birdal, who is also a left-wing politician.

Earlier this year the government initiated action against branches of the Human Rights Foundation after they offered counselling to torture victims. Amnesty campaigns in the past depressed Turkey's trade and tourism. Letter-writing seems to have more impact on those doing the torturing, however, and diplomats defend the principle of raising police forces. "They already know how to torture," said one. "The point is to teach them forensic methods that will allow them to dispense with the need for a confession in the first place."

Hugh Pope

'They tortured me, invited me to tea'

A Turkish torture victim, Ali Ekber Kaya, did not know he was about to feature in the latest campaign by Amnesty International, writes Hugh Pope.

From eastern Turkey, he said it was likely to be a mixed blessing. "Once the police said to me: 'If we knew you had this many foreign friends, we'd have simply got rid of you.' So I'm naturally a bit worried... But one thing is for sure. If it hadn't been for Amnesty International... I would not be living now."

Mr Kaya lives in Tunceli, which means "Bronze Hand", a name bestowed on the town of Dersim by the Turkish authorities after a Kurdish uprising was crushed there in 1938. The town is still plagued with ethnic-religious strife and killings.

"I'm both Kurdish and an Alevi, so I'm for the chop on both counts," Mr Kaya said. Alevi are heterodox Shia Muslims, often in conflict with the Sunni majority. He was first arrested in 1994 and tortured on suspicion of belonging to the separatist Kurdistan Workers' Party before being acquitted. He was rearrested in March 1995 and tortured for a confession that he was in the Marxist-Leninist Communist Party.

Amnesty said he was bled down, had two ribs broken,

was not allowed to sleep and was hung from the ceiling to be given electric shocks through his fingers and genitals. "The police think they are protecting their country, that they are protecting Islam. When the muezzin starts, they even 'top for prayers,'" said Mr Kaya. "I could still laugh at the absurdity of some of his experiences."

The group of 17 suspects was brought to court, where all but two were acquitted. A woman prosecutor had pity on them, shocked at their state but the police rearrested him and imprisoned him for two more months, although he was not harmed any more.

But release from jail did not free him from his torturers, who visited him at work in the municipality, once even asking him to call for tea. Mr Kaya, who has since brought a case against the police, said he believed their goal was to close the local branch of the Human Rights Association in the town. "They have succeeded. They have confiscated everything," Mr Kaya said. "They even asked me what I thought of the fact that they had tortured me. I said: 'What would you think if I had done that to you?' That kept them quiet for a while."

'Moderate amount of pressure'

Jerusalem - At 2am on 22 April last year Abd al-Samad Harizat, 30, a computer expert suspected of belonging to Hamas, the Islamic militant movement, was arrested in Hebron. He was under five feet tall but in good health. He was taken to Moschbiyyah prison, in Jerusalem. After hours of interrogation by the Israeli Shin Bet security service, he fell into a coma and died three days later of a brain haemorrhage caused by violent shaking.

"There is no doubt whatsoever about the cause of death," said a British pathologist cited by Amnesty. "He died from torture." Systematic torture by Is-

rael of Palestinians has been criticised by human-rights organisations for 25 years. Human Rights Watch/Middle East, based in New York, said: "Israel's ill-treatment of Palestinians under interrogation is distinguished not only by its conveyor-belt quality but also by the huge number of people who experience it." After the start of the Palestinian intifada (uprising) in 1987 the Israeli B'Tselem human-rights organisation estimated 5,000 Palestinians a year were being subjected to some types of torture and ill-treatment. Amnesty said hood-

ing, beating, sleep deprivation and prolonged shackling in painful positions are common. The severity of interrogation increased after the start of suicide bombings by Hamas and Islamic Jihad in 1994. A lawyer said: "Before there was some beating, now it is normal. Before the period of interrogation was shorter; now people are spending 90 days in interrogation." Interrogators are legally allowed to apply "moderate physical pressure" but human-rights organisations say that in practice this gives official permission for the torture of suspects.

Patrick Cockburn

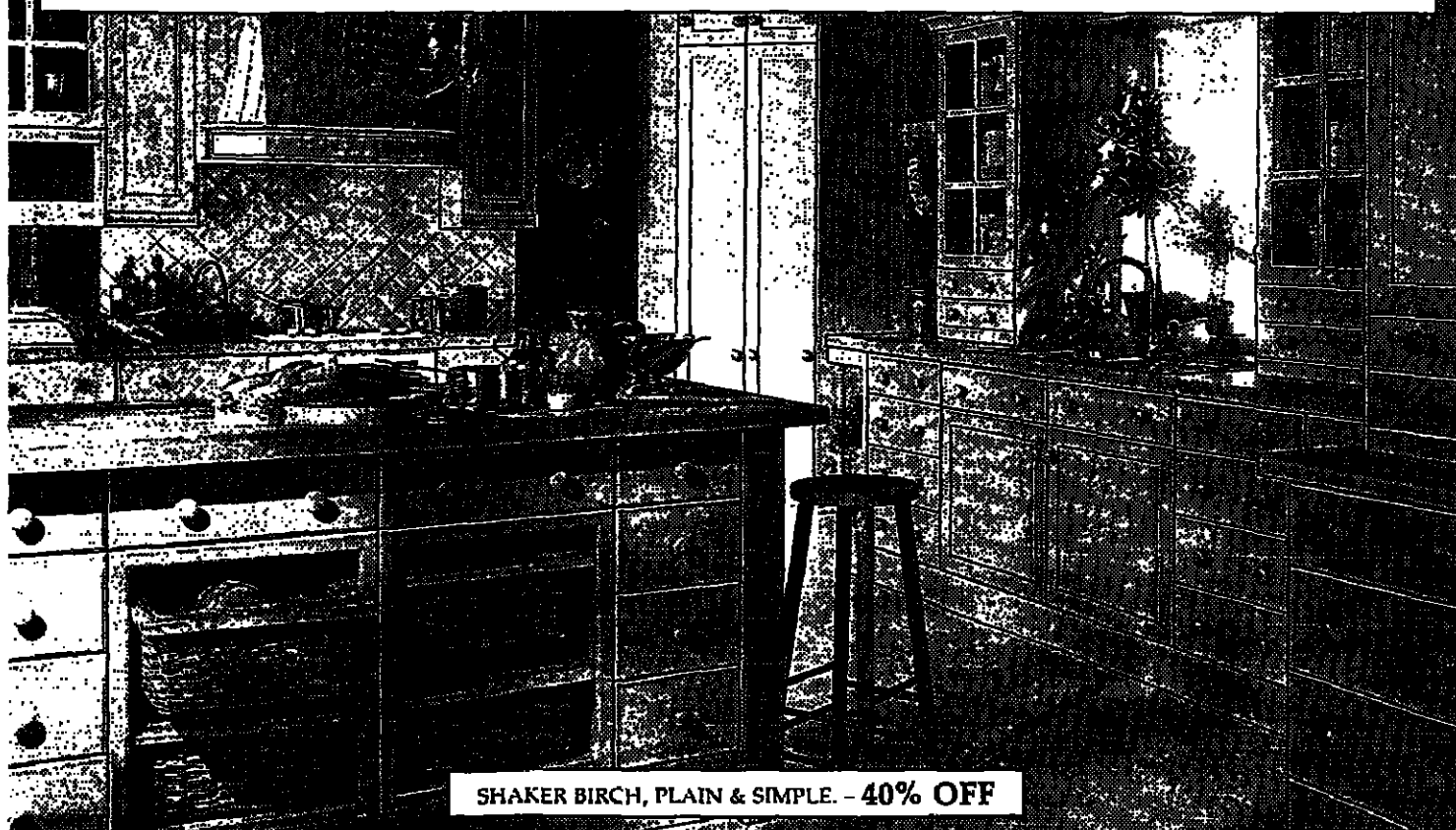
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the leader page

How Ken could leave Gordon in the lurch

He is rapidly becoming the lone voice of sanity in the Conservative Party. But his grip on that title is far from secure. Yesterday Chancellor Kenneth Clarke attempted valiantly to counteract the bellicose tone of the Government's statements on beef and Europe. However this great Europhile has still compromised enough to go along with the Government's official hostile line. Even he is not immune from the political pressure from the loonies on the party right.

Of equal concern and interest to the voters is whether Mr Clarke will display the same tendency to compromise in his day job: running the economy. He still makes all the right noises in all the right places. We hear him warn against tax cuts if the public finances will not bear them. Yesterday we discovered that he told the Governor of the Bank of England, Eddie George, that he was prepared to raise interest rates if the economy grew too fast later in the year.

All very admirable. But the pressure from colleagues anxiously eyeing their majorities ebb away is for Mr Clarke to engineer a feel-good boom with low interest rates and tax cuts in the run-up to the election. We can be pretty sure what a Conservative government would do if it cut taxes in the run-up to the election. It would blithely put them up again afterwards. That is what it did last time, a betrayal that Labour has exploited to the full. Yet this time

around Labour is almost certain to be the biggest loser from pre-election tax cuts. If tax cuts worked, the Tories would be back in power leaving Labour high and dry. If they did not work, Labour would be in power but with the unenviable task of clearing up the economic mess, in particular a ballooning public sector deficit, left behind by Mr Clarke. Labour's Shadow Chancellor, Gordon Brown, should be watching Ken Clarke's with extreme trepidation.

To be fair to the troubled Chancellor, he has done pretty well in maintaining a steady recovery. His predecessors Lawson and Lamont were each guilty of irresponsible opportunism with the public finances as they pushed the economy from boom to bust. Kenneth Clarke has resisted the temptation to do either.

He took a lucky punt on interest rates last summer, by cutting them against the advice of the Bank's Governor. His judgement that the economy was slowing down was proved right. At the moment, as the Bank's recent inflation report pointed out, growth is threatened in the short term by recession in Europe cutting our exports. As a result, interest rates need to stay low. But in the longer term, as consumption grows, fuelled by tax cuts and payouts from building societies turning into banks, inflationary pressures may build.

Mr Clarke's stated willingness to raise rates later in the year shows he is aware of the risk. The real test is yet to come:



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does he have the stomach to put rates up just before an election? We still do not know. But it is the temptation of tax cuts for Mr Clarke that should worry Mr Brown most. Here, Mr Clarke has had rather less luck. He raised taxes to sort out the pre-election mess created by Mr Lamont. He resisted the clamour from his backbenchers for more dramatic tax cuts last November. But he should never have cut taxes at all. He has been disingenuous about the scope for spending cuts without radical restructuring of the welfare state. And he has grossly misjudged his tax income. Forecasts for this year's government borrowing require-

ment are already running £8bn higher than his Budget projections. The shortfall, it seems, is structural not cyclical; a wise Chancellor would sort it out fast.

Sensible as Mr Clarke has often been in the past, it is probably too much to expect him to claw back tax cuts, or deliver genuine spending cuts. His record is one of basic sense tempered by optimism, with a few lucky bets thrown in for good measure. The chances are that he will again over-estimate his room to manoeuvre on the fiscal front, and cut taxes or indulge spending at least a little in the run-up to the election. We can only hope that he will resist the demand

for further tax cuts from his colleagues. History will judge him better for it.

Still, even a little fiscal frivolity by Mr Clarke now could make life hard for Gordon Brown should Labour win the election. For a start, Mr Brown will want to start tackling those underlying economic problems that trouble him so much: low skills, lagging investment and long-term unemployment. All of these will need cash. Meanwhile the clamour for extra spending on health, education and welfare from the rest of his party will not stay long subdued – as the recent controversy over the Jobseekers' Allowance has revealed. At the same time, if Mr Brown wants to keep open the option of joining a European single currency early on, he will need a low borrowing requirement in order to meet the Maastricht criteria. (Although a high deficit inherited from the Tories may provide Labour with the perfect excuse for avoiding a choice about joining a single currency.)

A Labour government's fiscal freedom to manoeuvre will be extremely limited. So what should the party do? Unless they are prepared to debate higher taxation with the voters, they will have to debate spending priorities within the party. Although Tony Blair and Mr Brown claim that no spending commitments are to be made, the entire party needs to face up to the reality of the state of the public finances and avoid raising expectations early on. If they are unhappy with

Mr Brown's proposals to abolish child benefit for over-16s, they should come up with spending cuts of their own.

The two chancellors, one in waiting and the other in office, are in similar situations. They differ on important issues: Clarke favours deregulation while Brown favours investment in education to stimulate the supply side of the economy. Yet they share considerable ground on economic policy. They are often out on a limb from colleagues and they are both singing tunes which their parties ignore at their peril.

Still hanging on the telephone

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Getting through is difficult, getting a prompt and convincing response even harder. Citizen's charter has failed. The monopolists have not made customers a priority. For years textbooks have said that public service begins at the front desk, or with our first call. More staff to handle calls are needed along with training in minimal politeness. Until the utilities improve the basics, they deserve a hammering from regulators and headline writers alike.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Beef crisis: a despicable political ploy

Sir: May a British resident abroad write to protest at the long-term damage to British interests being done by politicians in the beef crisis ("John Major does a Margaret Thatcher", 22 May)? Seen from here the crisis is wholly the fault of the British government, which is still giving the public sector borrowing requirement priority over public health. The game which some unscrupulous politicians are playing of trying to stir up racial hatred as a ploy to retain their seats at the next election is despicable.

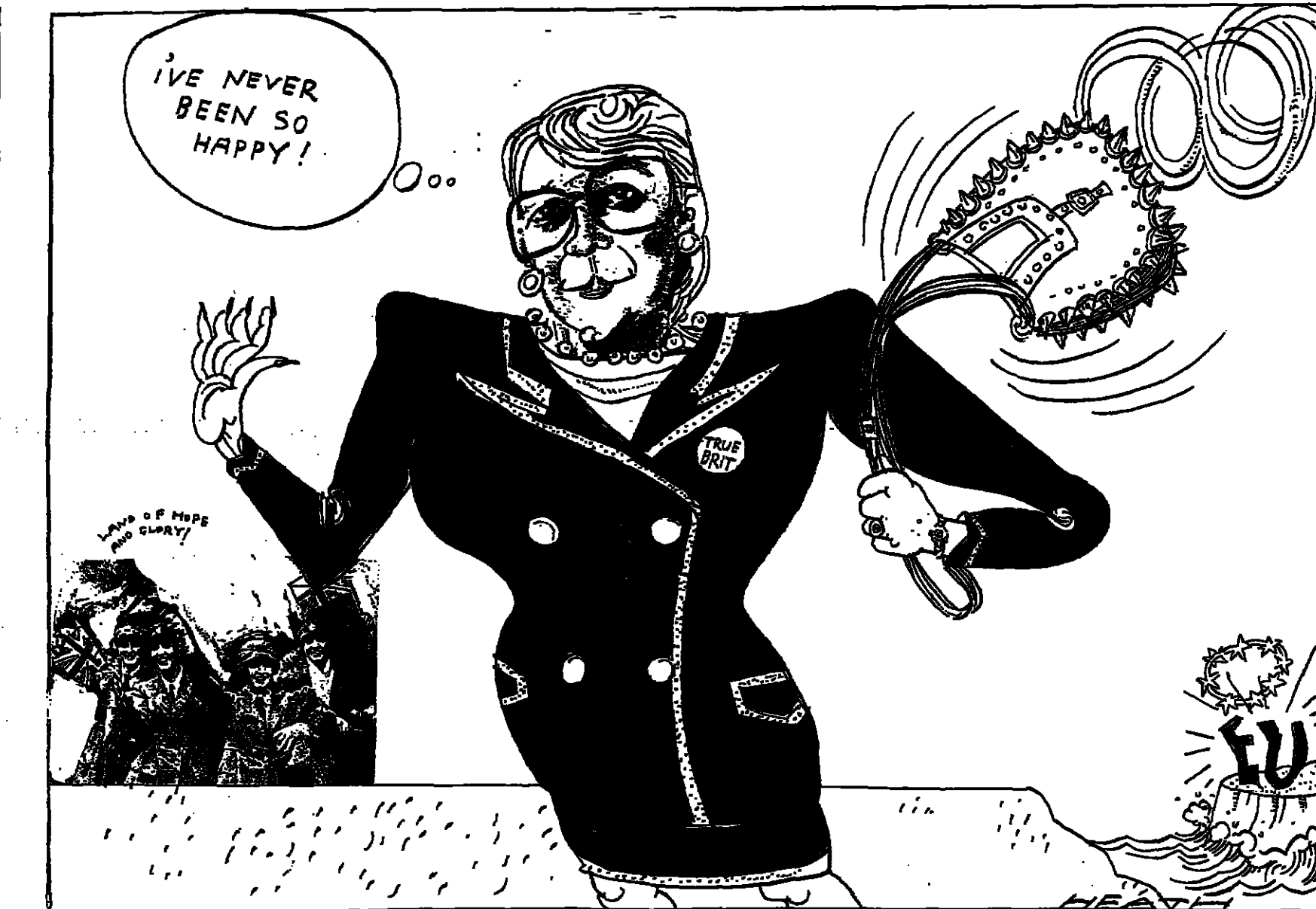
The repeated assertion that British beef is safe, in the current state of uncertainty about the origin and transmission of the disease CJD is quite unconvincing. Nothing is said about dissenting opinion. Great damage has already been done to the beef industry in Europe by the fear that contaminated beef may be in the food chain. Only a convincing eradication programme carried through by the British government with the help of their continental partners can eliminate rational consumer anxieties here. The suggestion of a conspiracy against Britain is at best paranoid, at worst grossly malicious.
CHARLES H SOUTHWOOD
Kärnten, Austria

Sir: The Government's policy in the beef crisis seems to have been misconceived from the start. Have we forgotten that only two months ago we were told that tens of thousands of people were at risk of an incurable, fatal disease through consuming beef products previously declared "safe" and that it would take about a year before we would have any reliable indication of the extent of that risk?

Should the worst case materialise, who could doubt that British beef would be shunned until the disease was eradicated? Should the outlook prove optimistic, pressures to ban it would disappear. The proper policy, therefore, is to accept a temporary ban, monitor the medical evidence, take sensible steps to accelerate the reduction of BSE without massive destruction of herds, provide help to tide the industry over this period, cease forcing beef down the throats of every visiting dignitary and stop railing against Europe (which is doing no less than Britain would do in the same circumstances) in the search for a quick fix to a misfortune we brought on ourselves.
JOHN ECKELAAR
Pembroke College
Oxford

Sir: Why cannot the Government admit that Britain is a minor power in Europe and the world, fast becoming disgraced and the laughing stock of other countries?

While it may well be ludicrous and impossible to hope to return to medieval farming methods, we should realise that meat is not an essential food product, and encourage farmers to grow foods that are healthy without the dangerous use of chemicals. We might then find, if we respect life instead of abusing it, and thinking of it purely as an industry, that our own lives improve in quality and moral substance.
ANNE BORN
Salcombe, South Devon



Mr Major comes out

Sir: If the Government succeeds, by petulance, in having the questionable ban on beef removed ("Major's EU work-to-rule puts us all in peril", 22 May), how then does it intend to generate the necessary orders to revitalise trade and secure the position of the industry?

All our future employment opportunities and our short-term economic security largely depend on the now threatened relationship between the UK and Europe.

I shall not readily forgive if my children's future is gambled against the re-election prospects of the Conservative Party via jingoistic xenophobia.
JAMES MACKIE
Witney, Oxfordshire

Sir: Is it not time that we in the UK humbly recognised what the rest of the European Union is trying to tell us – that a higher standard of performance in all that we do is required of us if we are to remain members of the Union – and that this can only be achieved by a greater exercise of good manners and good sense?
LEO HAYNES
Northwood, Middlesex

Sir: Can somebody tell me what anyone actually does with tallow these days ("Into battle for tallow, semen and St George", 22 May)? And while we're on the subject, what is the size of the UK export market in this contentious commodity?
DONALD McFARLAN
London W6

Don't blame ills on antibiotics

Sir: To blame the use of antibiotics for the increase in diseases hitherto regarded as conquered is incredible ("The waning of the antibiotic age", 21 May). Many of the diseases mentioned declined significantly as a result of increased living standards before antibiotics were available.

In the former Soviet Union obtaining antibiotics was the main problem. Now they are obtainable it is at a price out of reach for ordinary people. The former élite never had to face this problem. Now they have become capitalists they still ignore it.

For ordinary Russian men, life expectancy has declined from 70 to 59 and for women from 75 to 73 since the mid 1970s. In the Asian former Soviet republics the situation is worse.

The main reason for this is poverty. The collapse of the health service has exacerbated the situation. Although never good it is now non-existent for many. The result has been cuts in immunisation programmes and prohibitive costs of treatment.

The overuse of antibiotics does have to be tackled but to cite this at the major problem and ignore increasing world poverty is perverse and lets world leaders off the hook yet again.
IAN SPENCER
Research Assistant
Wellcome Unit for the History of Medicine
University of Glasgow

Sir: While Glenda Cooper is right to warn about the return of the microbe ("The waning of the antibiotic age", 21 May), her article fails to mention another trend – the decline of the medical microbiologist.

Alexander Fleming is claimed by the Scots as one of their great men. What they probably don't know is that his academic successors are, unlike the microbes, approaching extinction. I am the only professor of bacteriology left in the Scottish medical schools after more than a decade of cuts and retrenchment. No wonder infectious diseases are fighting back. They have never heard of research assessment scores or funding formulae.

Professor T H PENNINGTON
Department of Medical Microbiology
University of Aberdeen

Labour's use of Excalibur system

Sir: Your report, "Labour swaps private data with tycoon" (21 May), contains a number of inaccuracies.

I am writing therefore to make it clear that the Labour Party has never agreed with Philip Jeffrey that any data currently stored on the Excalibur system should be marketed or sold commercially, nor is it the party's intention to reach such an agreement in the future.

You claim that the computer is connected to the Internet. As this has never been checked with the

Labour Party and is simply untrue, I am baffled that such an assertion could be made.

The Excalibur software is available commercially. It is run on industry-standard computer hardware. Many other multinational and large public bodies use, or are considering using, the software and hardware concerned.

I am sure the manufacturers are very grateful for the publicity your paper has given them. I am less confident that you are concerned accurately to reflect either the nature of the technology or the use to which the Labour Party puts it.
DAVID HILL
Chief Media Spokesperson
The Labour Party
London SE17

Free phone calls to the Internet

Sir: Ian Quayle (letter, 21 May) is on the right lines when he revives Arthur C Clarke's proposal to abolish long-distance telephone charges as a way to celebrate the millennium.

However, users of the Internet will know that long-distance charges are already optional, in effect. The real need is for abolition of local call charges, as is already the case in Canada, New Zealand, most of the United States and numerous other places.

A recent international survey has shown that, unsurprisingly, where local calls are free, take-up and use of the Internet is three times

greater than where they are not. As the Internet is where the future lies, can we afford to subsidise British Telecom's excessive profits like this any longer?
JIM MANGLES
Diss, Norfolk

Sir: Your editorial "Making an exhibition" (17 May) highlights the need for a clearly defined management structure for the Greenwich millennium development.

In alluding to the Festival of Britain in 1951 you could have contrasted the current situation with the role played at that time by the London County Council. That authority was able to clear the South Bank, build an embankment wall, construct the Royal Festival Hall in time for the exhibition and make temporary improvements to the roads east and west of Westminster Bridge and to the south of Waterloo Bridge.

In addition, the LCC was granted special facilities to develop "Lansbury" in London's East End as an exhibition of "live" architecture with provision for schools, open spaces, shops as well as dwelling houses.

Regrettably, all the experience that went into the Festival of Britain was destroyed when the LCC's successor body, the Greater London Council, was abolished in 1986. Had it still been in existence, that council would have been the ready-made and ideal instrument to assume overall responsibility for the capital's contribution to the millennium celebration.
BILL ROLFE
Caterham, Surrey

The rot in Radio 3

Sir: Fiona Maddocks is mistaken ("Requiem for a man with the wrong vowels", 21 May). It is not the "wrong vowels" of Gambaccini that have produced such violent reactions. It is his style that is wrong and the fundamental mistake was made by the person who appointed Mr Gambaccini without realising this. His "enthusiasm, knowledge, know how" and strong personality are not in question.

As Ms Maddocks rightly points out, the rot in Radio 3 goes far deeper and the drop in listeners show that the changes have failed.

Radio 3 needs confidence and vision. Forget the obsession with "the new look" and let changes evolve as they always have done. Radio 3 has no need to feel threatened by the evangelical style of Classic FM but rather welcome the many new listeners attracted to serious music, by offering top quality programmes.

The controversy shows just how much goodwill there is for this wonderful programme – the jewel in the BBC's crown. Perhaps its time for a little humility and realisation that the listeners are not always wrong.
NICHOLAS J ZELLE
London SW19

Sir: Fiona Maddocks (21 May) has got it quite wrong about Radio 3. The issue is not one of Kensington vowels, the "right pronunciation" and all the other decayed and derelict class-ridden rubbish.

The issue is one of putting across knowledge, information and insight about music. People who recall Patricia Hughes remember her not for her smart voice, but for the unique manner in which she found appropriate words and modulation for saying something valid about music.

The tragedy of the present regime at Radio 3 is that it has lost the way of saying and speaking appropriate things about music. That is not easy, and requires insight, imagination as well as a great deal of humility before the music itself. In these days of personality-driven media stars, perhaps it is this last element which is most irrevocably lost.
CHRISTOPHER J WALKER
London W14

Blake's 'Cymru'

Sir: R Beynon (letter, 21 May) will be surprised to learn that a considerable body of Welsh souls are inspired to sing "Jerusalem" – and in Welsh as well.

When Parry's setting of Blake's words was adopted as the anthem of the Women's Institute, the founding branch in Wales not only had it translated into Welsh, but also – with remarkable political correct foresight – substituted "Cymru" for "England".
G V BARTON
Tonbridge, Kent

Not gone yet

Sir: It is always a pleasure to be quoted accurately, as Julian Critchley did yesterday, when repeating my assertion that the *Daily Mail* was being "increasingly nasty". But could I repudiate his suggestion that I am "late of the old Telegraph"?
JEREMY DEEDES
Managing Director
The Telegraph
London E14

essay



Portrait of London: regulation, order and civic pride seem old-fashioned, but they matter

Photograph: David Rose

Exit from the city of destruction

By Jonathan Glancey

Today, those of us with money and a degree of health and security are offered an ever increasing choice, not only of things, but of ideas and ways of ordering our lives. The free market enables those who live in cities to satisfy our apparently insatiable and urgent demand for whatever we want – a quarter-pounder with cheese, London buses the colour of a packet of Refreshers, 15 pounds worth of unprotected sex, sushi and Thai noodles at four in the morning, the occasion to play the good Samaritan dropping the odd coin into the lap of the homeless on London's Hungerford Bridge, and the rich, and ultimately indigestible, recipe of fashionable bars, cafés and shops that those lucky enough to be in work can afford.

Whatever we want, whenever we want it, that's the magic of the modern city. In a free market everyone's choice is valid. There are no longer powerful trade unions or entrenched restrictive practices to hold back entrepreneurs from the pursuit of a quick buck. We can

all buy shares and enjoy a bit of the profits ourselves. We are freed from the nuisance of having to think about that elusive and Victorian concept: the public good. There are no rules to tell us what is good or bad. The freedom of choice we seek means, ultimately, that nothing is better, just more expensive.

This notion of infinite choice has been the underpinning of the cities that successive governments have helped to build in Britain over the past 15 years: cities, but not necessarily communities. No city, of course, can be perfect. Christian, the hero of John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, sets out on a journey from the City of Destruction to find the Celestial City that stands behind closely guarded gates on Mount Zion. That city is the City of God and is reachable only after death. This, however, has never put off the living from trying to beautify cities. To do so, from the earliest recorded cities in what today we call Iraq onwards, a degree of planning and co-ordination was necessary. No beautiful city has ever come from the workings of the free market. A perfectly free-market city might be prof-

itable, but never a thing of beauty. It is more likely – Tokyo, for example – to be exciting but physically chaotic. The dream cities we go off to for weekend breaks – Paris, Rome or Siena – to escape our cities of destruction have all been highly planned, or, at least, represent a likeable mixture of regulation and deregulation.

Our cities have often failed to get this mix right. In deregulating and privatising civic services, spaces and utilities, and abolishing the Greater London Council, national government has offered Londoners a diversity of public services and utilities in exchange. Many are cheaper to run and offer lower fares and prices than before. Many London bus drivers, for example, take home about £150 a week. This means low costs. But is a low-wage urban economy a good thing in the long run? Deregulated bus services may or may not offer a good service. Some do, some don't. What we do know is that drivers no longer receive the expert training they once did under London Transport. The vehicles are shoddy things that

get the job done in a perfunctory way. They are no longer the classics of 20th-century design that once made their way into studies of exemplary urban design worldwide.

Deregulation in other areas of the urban economy might also seem to be liberating. By freeing entrepreneurs from minimum wages and maximum hours, for example, the deregulated city offers employment for more people than ever before working in our much celebrated new wave of cafés.

imposed by architects and to shorten design time. Yet the resulting buildings – a plethora of secondhand designs imported from Chicago and New York, have not exactly enhanced the capital.

Meanwhile, what were once public spaces have increasingly been privatised. We live in cities where malls and arcades are heavily policed and locked at night, in which the video camera plays an ever increasing role.

Regulation, order, civic pride and other such concepts might

enobling those we design for. The buses were a part of an integrated and famously well designed public transport network that, from 1933 to the 1980s was co-ordinated and run by London Transport.

That we have agreed to abandon this co-ordinated enterprise is sad, not least because its wilful destruction is a symbol of the way in which we have abandoned the very notion of the cohesive city. The London Transport model as a way of making sense of the modern city may, however, appear to be too forced, too contrived and too limiting. Of course there is a danger that regulating a city may make it too chaotic or too rigid. Civic enterprises such as London Transport, the London County Council and its successor, the GLC, were always in danger of becoming complacent, self-regarding bureaucracies run by jobsworths and men and women trained to take no risks.

And yet a city that orders its basic services and utilities, and has a long-term plan, even a very gentle one, for its streets and squares, its parks and rivers, is a city that is free to breathe freely. And without such a basic order surely a city lacks a spine and the basic components of a nervous system. It cannot hold together; cannot work out when it is in ill-health.

Disorder can, of course, produce variety, excitement and its own hit-and-miss beauty. No dog is more handsome or loyal than the highly deregulated mongrel, while those of us who cannot abide supermarkets and the culture of couch-potato passivity they bring in their space-consuming, car-generating wake, love the messy vitality of street markets.

We support them not only because they offer wide choice and low prices, but because they

are part of the civic drama we dream of when we think of sipping an espresso in an open air café in a piazza in Rome or Siena. Why not London or Manchester, Liverpool or Glasgow? A well ordered city provides a beautiful and workable backdrop to the theatre of the streets.

This civic drama is an active and not a passive play: cities with a future, as history shows, are highly active transformers creating music and poetry out of chanting and tribal dance, love out of sex, architecture from shelter, art from craft and civic order from rude nature. In Lewis Mumford's words, "the translation of ideas into common habits and customs, of personal choices and designs into urban structures is one of the prime functions of the city". A translation the opposite way causes the city to decline and fall.

Order and some degree of regulation do not mean turning London or Manchester into a vision dredged from the notebooks of Albert Speer. LCC housing estates from the turn of the century, designed by young socialist architects, still surprise with their gentle and civilised order. Here, were not just so many soulless "housing units" as we have learnt to call homes for the poor, but a celebration of the ideals of John Ruskin, William Morris and the Arts & Crafts movement: formal, ordered, yet not without beauty, designed to be a decent home to the poorest Londoners, the cockneys of yesterday, the Bengalis of today, and a far cry from either Broadwater Farm or their free-market successors.

Equally, the city with a strong backbone can support the most gorgeous festivities and buildings as wild as Daniel Libeskind's magnificently controversial design for a new

extension to the Victoria & Albert Museum. Framed by black cabs, red buses and Giles Gilbert-Scott telephone boxes, Libeskind's building will have the power to thrill and yet be kept in its place.

Can we create this vision of the democratically ordered but vibrant and diverse city? If we want to, of course we can. First we have to want a civic society rather than an urban miasma of individuals. And, second, we have to overcome a wish to have as much as we can of everything for as little as possible financially.

If, however, we continue to give in to the politics of selfishness, the modern city will integrate into ever smaller splinters, none of them capable of nurturing or providing the big civic gestures, whether Frank Pick's London Transport or the floundering millennium exhibition at Greenwich. These are the gestures that, like giant fireworks displays or music played live in public parks, lift everyday life above the mundane, encourage visitors and long-term business investment and which make us feel we share something in common rather than scurrying around like confused rats in a decaying sewer.

Perhaps, like stubborn children, we have allowed ourselves to be caught in a self-made stew of political dogma and lust for money dressed up as rational economics; if so, we will stay at the bottom of the hill in the City of Destruction with its Day-Glo buses, prostitutes' calling cards, teenagers sleeping rough, public spaces made private, and our only motivation, as passive customers rather than active citizens, a cheaper ride.

This article is an edited version of a lecture on the future of the city given to the Royal Society of Arts.

If we continue to give in to the politics of selfishness, the modern city will disintegrate into ever-smaller splinters

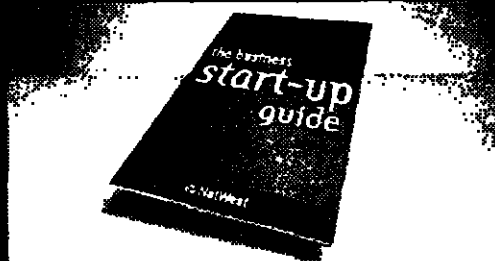
bars, restaurants, shops, and clubs. The city can stay open far longer than it did in the days of national and local government hegemony. By keeping wages low, we find jobs for those coming to this country to escape tyranny and poverty abroad. My local car wash was able to cut its price recently, from £8.95 to £5, when it replaced Yugoslavian cleaners with those recently arrived from the Gambia and Nigeria. Should I really be pleased that I have saved £3.95 on washing the car? Whether I should own a car and live in the city centre is another question: we are all a bag of contradictions.

Deregulation and diversity promise choice, but cannot always deliver. Free from restrictive planning and design guidelines, developers and their architects worked up all sorts of fanciful façades and elevations. Competitive tendering, design and build contracts and architectural competitions have all helped to cut the costs once

seem old-fashioned. Yet the high-quality public services and utilities, beautifully designed, were never designed solely to delight the eye of the aesthete, architect and connoisseur. They matter because they offer to every citizen regardless of class, creed, colour, age or income the very best we can create and make work at any one time.

Our model should be a well designed civic square, covered market or even a custom-designed red London bus. On its two decks is all of London life, chattering, gossiping, chewing gum, glued to mobile phones. There is no need for a bus to be the colour of Jacob's coat to prove that it belongs to the world of the free. The red London bus, designed and developed over 60 years, offered the highest standards of design and engineering as well as aesthetics for all Londoners and visitors to the capital. It did not discriminate. Design is not some sort of aesthetic bolt-on goodie; it is a way of working for people, of

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Gelatin, Tallow and Semen: a bullish outlook

Five months ago nobody had heard of the scientific and medical research outfit called Gelatin, Tallow and Semen. Now their shares are valued at £6m on the stock market. Their directors could retire as millionaires tomorrow. Indeed, they are secretly thinking of doing that very thing and retiring tomorrow, so that they can be in Barbados for the weekend.

"Well, I don't think it's actually much of a secret," grins Doug Gelatin, one of the three founder members of the firm, which is this week's runaway success story in Britain's thriving medical research sector. "Once word got around that we were developing a cure for road rage, you couldn't stop people buying shares and throwing money at us. That left us with two options. Either to cash in, take the money and run, or genuinely come up with a cure for road rage. Well, faced with the choice, what would you do?"

I think I'd genuinely come up with a cure for road rage, actually.

"Would you?" says Simon Tallow in unfeigned astonishment. "Good God. How extraordinary."

Simon Tallow is the technical whizzkid behind the amazing rags-to-riches story of Gelatin, Tallow and Semen. Does this mean he supervises the actual research of a cure for road rage?

"Not quite," he says. "I supervise the research into a need for a cure for road rage. This is what British business is all about – finding a gap in the market."

And filling it? "No, no, no! It's all about finding a gap in the market and making people believe you can fill it! Look, as soon as people sniff the fact that you may well be on to a cure for something, they go crazy and start snapping up your shares. TB, malaria, all these diseases that are coming back again or haven't been away, they all need new cures. Can you imagine what the stampede would be like if someone found a cure for Aids?"

A stampede by those suffering from Aids, you mean?

"Well, I suppose Aids sufferers would certainly display an interest," says Tallow, slightly taken aback, "but I was really thinking of the investors who need a cure for Aids. Make them a fortune! And they don't need a cure for Aids, just the hint of a cure for Aids."

"An investor can't afford to be left standing, you know, he has to be in on the ground floor, so he can't wait around to see if there really is a cure – he has to buy now!"

To help with research into the cure?

"You don't know much about the way stocks and shares work, do you?" says



Miles Kingston

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To help with research into the cure?

"You don't know much about the way stocks and shares work, do you?" says

Doug Gelatin, not unkindly. "Look, people don't buy shares to help anything but themselves. They don't buy Railtrack shares to make a better rail system – they buy them to get a slice of the action as Railtrack flogs off its assets."

"And they buy our shares to sell them and get a quick profit," says Barry Semen, the third member of the triumvirate. "Well, that's what we do, anyway."

Right. So how does the operation work?

"Easy," says Gelatin. "We drop hints broadly that we have stumbled on a cure for road rage. Not only that, but we also drop hints that we have proved a causal link between road rage and mad cow disease."

Road rage is linked to mad cow disease?

"No, of course it isn't, but that's what we want people to think. We're suggesting that it might be possible to cure road rage and BSE at the same time!"

"We are offering a hope of

an end to violence on the roads, and an end to the beef ban in Europe, with the self-same treatment."

"We are listening to what people want and we are giving it to them."

"We are taking their problems and giving them dreams back."

"We are listening to the pleas of farmer and motorist alike."

"We are playing the music of fulfilment and relief, the lull after the storm, the release from tension..."

The voices of Gelatin, Tallow and Semen rise and fall round me like seductive chamber music, like the honed tones of Paul Gambaccini introducing an exquisite string quintet, like the humming of bees on a fat summer afternoon. With difficulty I shake myself free of the spell and ask the big question:

"But have you actually found a cure for road rage?" There is no answer. I look round. They have vanished. I am alone. Perhaps I imagined it all...

سكنا من الاصل

the commentators

John Major has told Europe: 'Buy our beef, or else!' But why has he lost patience? And how safe is it?

The grey man turns purple

John Major has moods; he has a more volatile temperament than his frequently monotonous performances on the platform or at the dispatch box suggest. His anger, on Tuesday morning, with friendly countries such as the Dutch – for saying in advance that they would support Britain over the beef ban and then failing to do so – was genuine. So was his frustration at what seems to him a violation of the normal laws of objectivity: that an international group of veterinarians can get together and decide an issue of supposedly scientific fact on a qualified majority voting system based on the size of their native countries.

Genuine and understandable; it would be easy, if it were not for the rampant jingoism of yesterday's Tory press, to construct a respectable non-Europhobic explanation for his announcement that Britain is going to be bloody-minded in the EU until her partners start to look serious about lifting the beef ban. The collapse of British hopes on Monday came despite the support of both the European Commission and the French government; it was not the familiar story of Britain isolated. A few in Mr Major's circle have revelled in the lack of precedent for the tactics he unveiled on Tuesday. But you don't have to go back to De Gaulle in 1965, or even Margaret Thatcher 20 years later, to find examples of Euro-brinkmanship – whether it is the Italians on milk quotas or Felipe Gonzalez threatening to pull the plug on the Maas-tricht negotiations unless he got more cash from the cohesion fund.

Since that gruesome weekend when ministers first learnt that there was almost certainly a direct link between the bovine BSE and the human CJD, the beef issue has come to dominate, and sometimes paralyse, the government machine. Talk to a minister these days about, say, the problems of GP fundholding and he glazes over, scarcely able to concentrate on such a distant and relatively unproblematic issue. Engage him on beef and he instantly becomes animated, as he describes how this is the most intractable problem he has encountered in a lifetime in politics; how expensive it may prove to solve; how many jobs are tied up in the farming, slaughtering, rendering, deboning and meat retail industries; how it still has the capacity to bring down the Government.

Among the more sulphurous Euro-sceptics, the beef ban was

POLITICS

greeted with unhealthy glee as the issue that would finally make the cause of EU withdrawal respectable. Worse, their ranks were thickened by Tories with less strong views on Europe but lots of angry farmers in their constituencies. The creaking apology for a truce on Europe in the Tory party finally threatened to break on the backs of the country's stricken cattle.

Against that background there was an extraordinarily powerful impulse to do something, the impulse of an impatient motorist who, stuck in gridlocked traffic, takes an enormous detour simply to

increased by the fact that Tony Blair did not have the best of days on Tuesday. Caught, rather as Labour was in the very different circumstances of the Falklands, by the urge to oppose the mess of the current slaughter policy and the need not to appear unpatriotic, he exposed himself to the wounding charge from Mr Major that he had failed to "offer a single opinion".

For all these reasons, the pro-European Tories have fallen broadly into line. But they know, more than most, of the perils ahead. They lie in those little words in Mr Major's Tuesday statement: "and a clear framework leading to a lifting of the wider ban".

Let us suppose that the derivatives ban is lifted on June 3-4. The serious Euro-sceptics won't be content with that. They don't trust the Prime Minister; they remember all too vividly how in 1994 he excited them into thinking he was going to confront the EU over the weight of the British vote under Qualified Majority Voting and then backed down ignominiously. The scalp they want is lifting the total ban, not some carefully nuanced language about the gradual reduction of its scope.

Never mind that 8,500 BSE cases are still predicted this year and 5,000 in 1997, and that therefore elements of the ban could well stay in force at least until next year. Never mind that a prolongation of the strategy will mean vetoing directives patently in Britain's interests. Never mind the cogent argument of the pro-Europeans that it is crazy to fight an election on Europe, because this is precisely the issue on which the party is so divided. There are plenty on the Tory right – up to and including Cabinet level – who would be more than content to maintain this guerrilla war until polling day, who thrill at the prospect of a beef election.

Armageddon may well not happen. Mr Major is scarcely keener on the prospect than Mr Heseltine or Mr Clarke (who is said by close allies genuinely to believe that the strategy may now work). There is still an even chance that MPs will return from the Whitton recess to find that the political crisis in Europe has passed its worst. But yesterday there was more than one Tory, contemplating the fulsome headlines in yesterday's *Mail* and *Express* and their implication that only total victory will do, who remembered the grim remark of Major's 18th-century predecessor Robert Walpole on another European war: "They now ring the bells, but they will soon wring their hands."

DONALD MACINTYRE

Some Euro-sceptics greeted the ban with unhealthy glee

keep moving. But it was more than that. Patient diplomacy had been tried to the limit. Last Wednesday evening, John Major, Kenneth Clarke, Michael Heseltine, Douglas Hogg and Malcolm Rifkind shut down all public mention of the programme of EU disruption that had been discussed in detail in a series of papers shuffling between Mr Rifkind's office and Mr Major's. They did so because they genuinely believed that Portugal, Spain and the Netherlands would back them. But for complex reasons – including the competitive desire of the Dutch to preserve a commercial advantage for its own artificial insemination industry – they didn't.

So the strategy had a decent logic. One minister said yesterday that the move would force the issue out of the agriculture council into the in-trays of foreign ministers and heads of government where it belongs. Ministers were surprised earlier in the month that Jacques Chirac, although supportive, was not well-informed on the detail of beef when he visited London.

Backbench delight was only



Mad Hatter and mad cow: European consumers are not willing to put beef on the table

Tenniel/Mary Evans Picture Library

Still searching for real facts

The Prime Minister has chosen an odd rallying cry on which to start a war of European non-co-operation: "Beef is safe – the scientists tell us so." To which one is tempted to reply, with *Star Trek's* relentlessly logical Mr Spock, "Safe, but not as we know it."

The Government line that beef is "absolutely safe" faded away on 20 March, when Stephen Dorrell told the House of Commons that the best explanation to date for 10 recent, unusual cases of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (CJD) in young Britons was exposure to BSE before 1989. Since that day, no better hypothesis has emerged. Nor has any new hard evidence. Meanwhile, the scientists have been pushed to the back of the room while the politicians wrangle.

BSE and CJD are strange diseases in that the infective agent is not a bacterium or virus, but apparently a mishapen version of a protein, made naturally by the body, that accumulates and kills nerve cells. Nobody knows exactly what concentration of the infective agent (normally called a "prion") is present in different parts of the cow – such as the meat – before the disease shows up. Experiments with mice indicate that infected cows' brains are infectious (the mice catch BSE) but infected cows' beef isn't. That's not the same as saying beef isn't infectious to humans. And nobody knows if BSE can cause CJD. The science isn't there yet.

Thus it's true – but enormously disingenuous – for the Government to insist that beef poses no risk, and that no link has been proved between CJD and BSE. And it certainly doesn't follow that the beef ban should be lifted. Ten CJD deaths do not make an epidemiological study, but they provide the raw material to give a lot of scientists in the field the shivers.

Unfortunately, there are few reliable sources available for those who want to know what is known and what is only alleged. So how does one

SCIENCE

get a balanced view? Two new books are already at the booksellers: *BSE: The Facts* by Brian J Ford, chairman of the history of biology sector of the Institute of Biology, and *Lethal Legacy* by Dr Stephen Dealler, a medic who has been a consistent independent critic of the Government's approach to the disease in cattle.

Ford's is a thorough book, with details about animal husbandry, proportions of herds and breeds affected by BSE, feed manufacture, and not least the diseases themselves, which are per-

haps the most peculiar known to science. Certainly, the book lives up to its subtitle; I did not spot any significant errors of fact.

However, there's a big difference between buying wool and knitting a jumper. Some of Ford's assertions are wrong (such as that the disease which killed the 10 people was kuru, a CJD-like disease that affected cannibals in New Guinea; in fact their symptoms and pathology are quite different) and some of his statistical generalisations are wildly wrong (such as that half of Britain's abattoirs are breaking BSE regulations; in fact, half in a survey were breaking them, so the true figure could be the same, or more, or less).

But Ford provides a useful primer for reading Dealler's book, which moves the whole argument forward and contains a lot of data that the

Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF) should long ago have released for public consumption – such as how long the epidemic of BSE can reasonably be expected to continue. Dealler's answer, based on some densely-argued statistics, is that in 1999 there will still be between 900 and 8,700 recorded cases. (His figures accord with an independent study published recently by a team at Oxford University.)

Dealler points out that we must have eaten hundreds of thousands of infected cows in the past 15 years which were not yet showing symptoms. Whether the disease is caused by chance exposure to a single dose, or by a build-up of small doses, we should be worried about how much of the prior agent we are absorbing. Dealler takes the conservative, "cumulative" approach and builds it into a big table showing infectivity and dosage.

He interprets this to show that for adult Britons, there's no benefit in stopping eating beef: the biggest risk (in terms of exposure to the BSE prion) has already been taken. Stopping now might halve your risk, but to improve your chances (assuming that BSE can cause CJD), you need to cut that risk tenfold – which isn't possible now. You can't un-eat past meals.

But a parallel conclusion he draws is that foreign visitors and children would be better off not eating British beef, "just as you advise people not to drink the water when they visit some foreign countries". How strange if the highly developed nature of our farming has brought us to the same stage as a developing country. Not that Mr Major will be too worried. Politics, not science, is in the driving seat, reading off a faulty map.

CHARLES ARTHUR

'BSE: The Facts' by Brian J Ford (Corgi Books, £4.99). *'Lethal Legacy: BSE – The Search for the Truth'* by Dr Stephen Dealler (Bloomsbury, £5.99).

The pure poetry that is Dolespeak

The would-be president has a great accent, says Rupert Cornwell. He just needs something interesting to say

Let me say it at the outset. I've missed George Bush, badly. Not because I'm a closet Republican (perish the thought in this impartial newspaper). Nor because of anything he ever did in the White House (which, apart from winning the Gulf war, was next to nothing) or because he was the nicest US president in recent memory (which he was). The gap in my life has been what he said, or rather the way he said it – in other words, Bushisms.

For those of us who observed first hand the Demosthenes of modern American presidents in action

The man hates talking, and is profoundly suspicious of those who enjoy it

between 1989 and 1993, the very phrase has one quivering with laughter. No one, surely, could ever replace George Herbert Walker Bush's way with syntax, which could turn any public appearance into *Saturday Night Live*. Certainly not Bill Clinton, who speaks in textbook sentences with a recognisable beginning, middle and end, who forces no metaphor, whose chain of thought is quite maddeningly clear. But three and a half years on, happy days are here again. I refer to the dawning era of Dolespeak.

At first glance the dry-as-dust, soon-to-be ex-senator from Kansas is a poor substitute. No one, after all, could match Bush in full flow: on the economy ("coming off a pinnacle, so to speak, of low unemployment"), or on the endangered Pacific Spotted Owl ("we want to see the lit-furry-feathery guy protected, and all of that") or the burdens of high office ("Remember Lincoln, going to



The great orator takes centre stage: Bob Dole says 'America, it's about values. Decency. Best making 'Merica great again'

Photograph: Brian Harris

his knees in times of trial and the Civil War and all that stuff. We are blessed. So don't feel sorry for – don't cry for me, Argentina...")

And those three specimens are taken from just a single morning of campaigning in New Hampshire, on 15 January 1992, by a president accused of paying no attention to America's domestic ills, that will be known to devotees forever as "Message: I Care" day. Bush's endorsement of Bob Dole last March was a small gem too, praising the candidate's "mature leadership and character, and things of that nature". Among those "things", eloquence does not feature.

If Bush's problem was too many words, too many half-finished thoughts and weird non-sequiturs, Dole's is the opposite. The man basi-

cally hates talking, and is profoundly suspicious of anyone who enjoys it – hence his visible discomfort alongside babbler like Newt Gingrich. But the basic failing of both Bush and Dole is identical: an inability to articulate what passes through the brain. With Bush the result was discombobulated goofiness. With Dole it is a terse, tongue-tied verbal shorthand.

Dole's diction is a law unto itself. Syllables, indeed entire words, are swallowed, lost in truncated phrases fired out in short rasping salvos. They describe how Bob Dole as "President" would reduce the "dead-end" (senators) would let him. Like Bush, he is acutely vision-challenged.

What's all about? In his speeches, he answers the question thus: "This election's bout 'Merica. It's 'bout the

future. Values. Decency. 'Bout makin' 'Merica great again." Often the litany ends with his trademark sign-off, "whatever". Dole's peculiar way of terminating a chain of thought, or a conversation he doesn't want to continue, "Just gonna keep on going. Whatever."

The modest Midwesterner further horrifies his speechwriters with his fondness for referring to himself in the third person, a habit shared by Julius Caesar in his histories and modern black gang toughs on the streets of US cities. Not "My position is..." but "Bob Dole's position is..." Maybe it's his roots in the small plains town of Russell, where by all accounts every-one talks like that. Or maybe it's the horrendous war wounds that trouble him to this day, underlining how words are cheap, but real suffering is not. Whatever.

But do not be overhasty in writing off Bob Dole in this autumn's three presidential debates against the super-smooth, super-articulate Bill Clinton. For one thing, he has acquired a new speechwriter, the novelist Mark Helprin, who produced the gloriously sappy speech with which Dole announced his resignation from the Senate last week. "As summer nears, I will seek the bright light and open spaces of this beautiful country and will ask for the wise counsel of its people, from the sea coasts of Maine and California to the old railroad towns in the Midwest,

The Midwesterner shares Caesar's habit of referring to himself in the third person

to the verdant South..." Pure poetry for the rest of us, but you could almost hear Dole wincing as he spoke it – who writes this stuff? But there was hardly a dry eye in the house. And, as Bob Dole would say, that's what it's all about.

Second, there's his accent. Bush's preppy pseudo-Texas fooled no one. But Dole is an authentic product of the prairies, speaking the "North Midland" dialect of the US heartlands. Language scientists have found that of all the important dialects and accents, it is the one that Americans relate to and trust the most – more certainly than the gushing Bubbaspoken now emanating from the White House. But to exploit this asset properly, Dole must find something interesting to say. In other words, George Bush's pesky old "vision thing". At which point, a growly shade descends by my ear. "Workin' on it," it mutters. Whatever.

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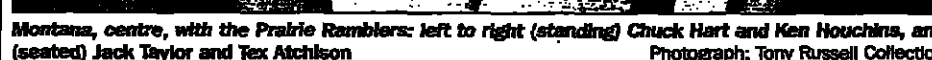
**Maj-Gen Sir
Christopher
Welby-Everard**



In 1954, he was appointed commander of 264 Scottish Beach Brigade and 157 Infantry Brigade (TA). After a pe-

Max Arthur
Christopher Earle Welby-Everard, soldier: born Gosberton, Lincolnshire 9 August 1909; OBE 1943, CBE 1961, KBE 1965; Chief of Staff, HQ Allied Forces, Northern Europe 1959-61; GOC Nigerian Army 1962-65; married 1958 Peggy Shorrocks (died 1994, two sons); died 10 May 1996.

Christopher Earle Welty-Everard, soldier: born Gosberton, Lincolnshire 9 August 1909; OBE 1945, CBE 1961, KBE 1965; Chief of Staff, HQ Allied Forces, Northern Europe 1959-61; GOC Nigerian Army 1962-65; married 1938 Peggy Shorrocks (died 1994, two sons); died 10 May 1996.



She continued to tour into the Seventies, often performing with her two daughters as the Patsy Montana Trio. In 1993 Patsy Montana became one of only two women – the other being Roy Rogers's wife Dale Evans – to receive the Western Music Association's "Living Legends of Western Music" award, a fitting honour for one of country music's true pioneers.

Ruby Blevins (Patsy Montana), musician: born Hot Springs, Arkansas 30 October 1914, married 1934 Paul Rose (two daughters); died 3 May 1996.

Television lost its ITV franchise and no more programmes were made until the series was resurrected by a producer in New Zealand. Two series of *Worzel Gummidge Down Under* (1987, 1989) were made, screened in Britain on Channel 4, and at the time Pertwee told me: "It's my baby. I felt tremendous responsibility for it. I'm the one who has nurtured it and kept it going."

Pertwee made his television debut back in 1946, playing the Judge in a BBC production of *Toad of Toad Hall*, a screen adaptation of A.A. Milne's play.

from Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind in the Willows*. Kenneth More played Mr Badger.

Pertwee's later television appearances included *Round the Bend* (1956), the adventure series *Ivanhoe* (1958), the tramp-steamer sitcom *Glencannon* (1960) and *The Avengers* (1967) before he took over as the Time Lord in *Doctor Who* (1970-74). By now a television star in his own right, Pertwee was hired by Thames Television to present three quizzes of the ITV crime quiz *Whodunnit?* (1973-78), landed a guest role in *The Goodies* (1975) and starred as

In 1992, he appeared with his actor son Sean in the television film *Virtual Murder*. He was last seen on screen in March as guest presenter in the Channel 4 magazine programme *Foot in the File*, reporting on how insect feed on humans' breakfast cereals, even eating through their cardboard boxes. Pertwee's daughter, Daryl, also continues the family acting tradition, and his cousin Bill is still remembered for his role as AR. Warden Hydes in *Dad's Army*.

Tony Heath

William Robert Lawrence, police officer: born Ystradgynlais, Powys 21 September 1942: QPM 1991; Chief Constable, South Wales Constabulary 1989-96; married 1965 (one son, one daughter); died Swansea 21 May 1996.

Pertwee between scenes of the play *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, 1963
Photograph: Hulton Getty

ther. *A Yank at Oxford*, the first major Anglo-American feature, was a huge pre-war success starring Robert Taylor, Vivien Leigh and Lionel Barrymore, and *Dinner at the Ritz* featured David Niven. His father's stage play *To Kill a Cat* also provided Pertwee with his West End debut, at the Aldwych Theatre in 1939.

Wartime service in the Navy led to Pertwee's radio success, but he continued in films for most of his career, with appearances in mostly comedy features such as *Carry On Cleo* (1964), *Carry On Cowboy*

IN MEMORIAM
DOWLAND: David. 6 December 1936-23 May 1991. With love, Josephine.
SHEEHAN: Kevin, you will be pleased to know that after six years, you are still missed deeply by everyone.
SHEEHAN: Kevin. 21 September 1961-23 May 1991. Life levels all men: death reveals the eminent.

Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, 72; Lady Olga Maitland MP, 52; The Earl of Mount Charles, pop concert promoter, 45; Mr John Newcombe, tennis player, 52; Mr Peter Preston, editorial director, Guardian Media Group, 58; Mr Robert Sangster, racehorse owner and breeder, 60; Mr Alice Shaw, clarinettist and band-leader, 86; Mr John Stevens, MEP, 41; Sir Sanderson Temple, former circuit judge, 75.

Birkens: Elias Ashmole, antiquarian, 1617; Carolus Linnaeus, botanist, 1670; William Hunter, obstetrician and medical writer, 1718; Franz Anton Mesmer, physician, 1734; Sir Charles Barry, architect, 1795; Thomas Hood, poet and humorist, 1799; Leo Baeck, rabbi and theologian, 1873; David Ben-Gurion (David Ben-Zion), leader of the Zionist movement, 1883; Paul Fabian Leguérin, novelist and poet, 1891; Dr. Edmund Rubbra, composer, 1901; John Bardsley, an inventor of the transistor, 1908. Deaths: Girolamo Savonarola, priest and reformer, strangled and burnt at the stake 1484; Captain William Kidd, naval officer, pirate and murderer, hanged in London 1701; John Wood, architect and town planner,

1754; Kit Carson, frontiersman, 1881; Leopold von Ranke, historian, 1881; Henrik Johan Ibsen, playwright, 1906; Bonnie Parker and Clyde Barrow, outlaws, killed in an ambush 1934; John Davison Rockefeller, industrialist and philanthropist, 1937; Lord Austin (Herbert Austin), motor manufacturer; 1941; Heinrich Himmler, Nazi leader, committed suicide 1945; Jimmy (James Francis) McHugh, popular composer ("On

the Sunny Side of the Street", 1969.
On this day: Joan of Arc was taken prisoner by the English, 1430; the Demonstration of Prague took place, 1618; Marlborough defeated the French at the Battle of Ramillies, 1706; in Canada, the North West Mounted Police was established, 1873; the Associated Press News Service was founded, 1900; Italy declared war on Austria-Hungary, 1915; Whitepaw Zoo was opened, 1931; the British parliament agreed a plan for the independence of Palestine, but this was denounced by both Arabs and Jews, 1939; the declaration of the George Washington Institute for the Study of the Holocaust, 1978.
Today announced the capture of Adolf Eichmann, a former Nazi chief, 1960. Today is the Feast Day of St Aldhelm, St Desiderius of Viviers, St Euphrosyne of Polotsk, St Guilbert, St Ivo of Chartres, St John

Lectures
Victoria and Albert Museum: John Hall, "Embossed Images on Paper", 2.30pm.
British Museum: David Bindman, "Rouilliac's Shakespeare: genius or gentleman?", 1.15pm.
National Gallery: Stella Gamblin

"Spring Chickens (iv): Velázquez's Early Paintings", 1pm.
National Portrait Gallery, David
Livingstone Lecture Series: Dr Tim
Barringer, "Fabricating Africa: Tim
Livingstone and the visual image",
1.10pm.
Date Gallery: Frances Borzello, "Pi-
casso's *Marie-Thérèse*", 1pm.
University College London: Profes-
sor Daniel Miller, "Taking Max to
Sainsbury's", 5.30pm.
Exeter University: Eddie George,
"Shaojuzi the Future", 2.30pm.

Luncheons

Lord High Commissioner
The Lord High Commissioner to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, the Princess Royal, gave a luncheon yesterday at the Palace of

Hollywoodhouse. Among those present were:

The Earl and Countess of Airth; Sir Iain and Lady Margaret Tennant; Mr and Mrs Niall Campbell; The Rev and Mrs Murray Chalmers; Professor Coppock; Mr and Mrs Alex Gordon Duff; Mr and Mrs James Hepburn Scott; Mr and Mrs John Jameson; Mr and Mrs Peter Lederer; Professor and Mrs Richard Whitfield.

Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Mr Malcolm Rifkind QC MP, Secretary of State.

relays of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, held a luncheon yesterday at 1 Carlton Gardens, London SW1, in honour of Mr Habib Ben Yahia, Tunisian Foreign Minister.

Foreign and Commonwealth Office
Mr Jeremy Hanley MP, Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, hosted a luncheon yesterday at Lancaster House, London SW1, in honour of Mr Faïsal Husseini, Chief Palestinian Representative in Jerusalem and Head of Palestinian Negotiating Team for the Multilateral Track for the Peace Process.

Canning House

The Earl of Limerick, President of Councils at Canning House, was host for an address given yesterday

evening by Mr Malcolm Rifkind QC, MP, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, following his recent visit to Latin America.

Lord High Commissioner
The Lord High Commissioner to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, the Princess Royal, gave dinner last night at the Palace of Holyroodhouse. Among those present were:

Vice-Admiral Sir James and Lady Weatherall; Professor Sir Stewart and Lady Sutherland; Mr and Mrs Chris Andrews; Mr and Mrs Gilbert Archer; Mr Alexander Bruce; Dr John Caldwell; Mrs Eric Downie; Professor and Mrs Derek Ellwood; The Rev Thomas and Mrs McWilliam; Dr A.W. Pike; Mr and Mrs Mary Pyper; Mr and Mrs David Prichard; Professor and Mrs Andrew Rutherford.

Technology
Lord Butterworth was in the chair at a lecture and dinner discussion held yesterday evening at the Royal Society, Carlton House Terrace, London SW1. Dr Craig Baker, Mr John Newing, Mr Andrew Foster and Mr Jonathan Bamford spoke on "Information Technology: the Police"

The Duke of Edinburgh visits Salford University, Greater Manchester, visits Heathlands, Jewish Homes for the Aged, Preswich, Lancashire, and as Honorary Life Member, attends the 50th anniversary lunch of the Manchester Naval Officers' Association. The Princess Royal, Lord High Commissioner to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, visits the Methow Centre, High Street, Edinburgh, visits Helmsley Castle, Middlesbrough, visits Mid Cragie Parish Church Project, Dundee, visits Schools Unit Project, After School Care Association, Broughley Ferry East Church, Dundee, and visits the City of Dundee at Burrell, in Dundee.

Changing of the Guard
The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am. 1st Battalion Welsh Guards mounts the Queen's Guard, at Buckingham Palace, 11.30am. Train provided by the Welsh Guards.

World Bank. 61; Mr Graeme Hick cricketer, 30; Mr Anatoly Karpov, chess player, 45; Sir Peter Kenilorea, Minister for Foreign Affairs, and former Prime Minister, Solomon Islands, 53; Sir James Lester MP, 64; Sir John Lyons, Master of Trinity Hall, Cambridge, 64; Mr Humphrey Lyttelton, jazz musician, 75; Mr Michael McCrum, former Master of

gian, 1873; Douglas Fairbanks (Douglas Elton Thomas Ullman), actor, 1883; Par Fabian Lagerkvist, novelist and poet, 1891; Dr Edmund Rubbra, composer, 1901; John Bardeen, an inventor of the transistor, 1908. Deaths: Girolamo Savonarola, priest and reformer, strangled and burnt at the stake 1498; Captain William Kidd, naval officer, pirate and murderer, hanged in London 1701; John Wood, architect and town planner,

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CITY & BUSINESS EDITOR: JEREMY WARNER

Bank warns lenders to cool mortgage frenzy

PETER RODGERS
Business Editor

The Bank of England has warned banks and building societies to cool off the frenzy in the mortgage market by reining back their generous discounts on loans and cashback offers.

Bank officials are concerned that lenders are not taking enough account of the risk of a sharp rise in interest rates or a downturn in the economy over the next few years that could bring a return of heavy losses on mortgage lending.

Low inflation should lead to lower average interest rates, but this does not mean an end to volatility in the cost of money, Bank officials believe.

They are also urging lenders to be vigilant in choosing mortgage customers and take more

care about the terms on which loans are made. Lenders have also been told to be more open in their accounts about the costs of the deals they are offering and more realistic about the market shares they expect.

The Bank's fears have been heightened by the prospect that several of the largest and most aggressive building societies, including Halifax, are in the process of becoming banks.

At the moment they are not feeling the pain of the mortgage price war because they are cushioned by the large number of savers who are keeping cash in their accounts in expectation of payouts on conversion. This means competition for new savings has eased, taking pressure off bank and building society savings rates.

As a result, the overall prof-

it margins remain at near-record levels, temporarily masking the effect of the mortgage price war. The margin between the standard variable mortgage rate and the instant access savings rate stands at about 4 percentage points.

This high profitability is likely to fall rapidly once societies have paid out conversion windfalls to depositors in the next 12 to 18 months, putting upward pressure on savings rates.

The Bank is concerned that some lenders could be amassing large hidden liabilities. Banks as well as building societies that are about to convert into banks are being told to come clean in their accounts about the cost of cashbacks and discounted mortgages.

Few big mortgage lenders clarify in their accounts the ef-

fect of alternative treatments of the costs of cashbacks and discounts and there is an argument to spread the cost or charge it all in the first year.

Abbey National spreads the cost of cashback offers over a period, lessening the impact, but said in its last annual report that if the whole cost had been taken up-front profits would have been £105m lower. The Bank of England wants this openness adopted more widely.

Lloyds TSB and NatWest are among those that spread the cost of cashbacks over several years while Barclays charges it in the first year - but none of them disclose the amounts. Halifax charges the full cost of cashbacks in the first year.

The Bank's Banking Act report yesterday said: "Over the

past year, there has been a noticeable increase in the competition among banks, building societies and other financial services companies for lending to individuals, particularly for home mortgages. Discounted mortgages and cashbacks have become common, particularly for first-time buyers, as some lenders have sought to increase market share and overall lending growth in a housing market which has remained subdued."

It cites a number of "good news" trends explaining this, including low inflation, but warns lenders to "continue to assess carefully the terms on which they write business. Caution also needs to be exercised in the methods of accounting which are adopted for any schemes used to induce business."

Comment, page 25

Mortgage mania: five of the best

About to de-mutualise, will discount its standard variable rate by 2.86 per cent until June 1999 for second-time buyers and chuck in a free valuation, worth about £150, into the bargain. However, those wanting to move their mortgages before June 2003 will have to pay a penalty of 3 per cent of the loan in year one and two, rising to 6 per cent in the third year before tapering off thereafter.

About to be taken over by Abbey National, charges nothing until the end of December this year. A free valuation and buildings and contents insurance is also on offer until then. No mortgage indemnity insurance is charged, a saving of about £1,200 on a standard loan. In return, penalties of up to seven months' interest.

Gives a cashback of 6 per cent up to £5,000, but claims the rebate back in the event of early redemption.

Owned by Lloyds Bank, throws in a cashback worth 3 per cent of the mortgage advance up to £7,500, plus no mortgage indemnity and a free valuation.

Another society planning to float, offers cashbacks of 6 per cent up to £9,000. But that sum will have to be repaid in the event of a redemption within the first six years.

Source: MoneyFace

Granada holds on to Meridien in hotels sale

MATHEW HORSMAN

Granada, the media and leisure giant, is to keep the Meridien hotels it inherited following its hostile £3.9bn takeover of Forte, at least for the "immediate future", the company said yesterday. But Forte's exclusive hotels, including luxury trophies such as the Grosvenor House and the Hyde Park hotel in London, and the George V in Paris, will formally be put up for sale within 10 days, and could fetch as much as £1bn.

"We came to the conclusion that we could enhance profitability at the Meridien hotels, and that it would be better for shareholders," Charles Allen, Granada's chief executive, said.

However, a Granada insider conceded the chain, which is largely run on management contracts, could still be sold off later, depending on market interest and the results of the profit-enhancement plan.

Launching its hostile bid last November, Granada had said it would sell Forte's trophy hotels, its chain of motorway service areas, a majority stake in the Savoy Group and a 25 per cent stake in Alpha Airports, the catering company, raising about at least £500m.

In the heat of the battle, however, Granada's then-chief executive Gerry Robinson, who has since become chairman, changed strategy, promising to sell the Exclusive and Meridien chains to help pay down the crippling debt Granada would take on to finance the acquisition.

"When we came to look closely at the hotels, we began to make a determination about

their future profitability," Mr Allen said yesterday. "We saw there was considerable scope to tighten up the Meridien chain."

Large shareholders were told of the decision to keep the chain yesterday, and were supportive of management, analysts said. "There is apparently a high level of comfort that the team of Gerry Robinson and Charles Allen can enhance profits," said one leading analyst. "There is certainly no problem servicing the debt."

The exclusive hotels will be offered to as many as 60 buyers who have "pre-qualified" for the sale, Granada insiders said. A sales memorandum with detailed information on the 17 properties will be sent to all those willing to sign a confi-

dentiality agreement. It is expected that a short list of four potential buyers will emerge, followed by a auction.

Sir Rocco Forte, who lost the bitter battle over his family company, is expected to be among the bidders for at least some of the exclusive hotels, according to his advisers. He has been attempting to raise financing in the City to buy back as much of the core hotel assets as possible.

It is believed some buyers will bid for several properties, particularly those dubbed "sub-brands" by Granada. These include the two Westbury hotels (in London and New York) and the two Hotel Plaza Athénée (in New York and Paris).

Comment, page 25

Occupancy rates in UK at best levels for decade

The buoyancy of the UK hotel market is underlined today in a report showing occupancy rates are at their highest for a decade, writes Patrick Toher.

Average room occupancy levels last year rose to 69.6 per cent, up 7.1 per cent on 1994 and a fifth higher than the levels recorded during the depths of the recession four years ago.

London put in an even stronger performance with 81.9 per cent of rooms occupied on average, a 7.9 per cent improvement on 1994. British hotel profits rose by 9 per cent last year as average room rates jumped from \$47.43 to \$50.17.

A typical London hotel room

now costs \$88.57 a night against \$81.52 in 1994.

Jonathan Langston, joint managing director of the report's authors, leisure consultancy BDO Hospitality, says: "Increasing confidence levels have now been confirmed by these significant improvements in performance. Granada's decision to raise Forte's hotel room prices was overdue and will pave the way for other hoteliers to consider their published tariffs and introduce price increases."

The report warns: "The industry must guard against the greed of the late 1980s and continue to deliver value through ongoing investment."

Ex-Birmingham Midshires finance boss found dead in car

NIC CICUTTI

Barry Cameron Small, the former finance director at Birmingham Midshires who resigned suddenly last year after just a few months with the building society, has been found dead in a fume-filled car.

His body was discovered in his car parked on Army land near his home in Farnham, Surrey. Police said his death, from carbon monoxide poisoning, was not being treated as suspicious. Mr Cameron Small left no notes indicating that he intended to take his own life.

Keith Brown, coroners' officer in Guildford, said the dead man's widow had made a statement saying that her husband's departure followed personal clashes between her husband

and Midshires' high-profile chief executive, Michael Jackson, prior to his departure.

But this was not being treated as the cause of last week's death, Mr Brown added.

When he left his job in December, Mr Cameron Small collected a £181,000 pay-off, taking his total pay for the year to £285,000, plus a £10,000 pension contribution.

Birmingham Midshires, currently the UK's 10th-largest society, is regarded as one of the more aggressive in its sector. It is stalking a smaller Midlands rival, West Bromwich, and is known to favour a takeover by a bigger financial institution.

Mr Cameron Small, 41, joined the society in early 1995 and was involved in the purchase of Hypo MSIL, a large cen-



Sudden departure: Barry Cameron Small

tralised mortgage lender. Birmingham Midshires yesterday denied any personality clashes between Mr Cameron Small and its chief executive.



Betting men's choice: Sir Ian Prosser (left) with Bass finance director Richard North

Bets placed on a Bass bid for William Hill

TOM STEVENSON
City Editor

Bass was tipped yesterday as a likely bidder for William Hill following an unexpected write-down in the value of the Brent Walker betting shops chain.

The write-down, from a value of £690m to £428m, was widely seen as the prelude to a disposal at a price of about £450m.

The increasing speculation followed higher-than-forecast first-half profits from Bass and the refusal of Sir Ian Prosser, chairman and chief executive, to rule out any of the rumours that have made the company one of the City's favourite predators in recent months.

Bass, which already owns 930 betting shops through its Coral chain, is thought the most likely to snap up William Hill's 1,650 outlets in a deal that would make it Britain's largest bookmaker, well ahead of Ladbrokes, which has 1,900 outlets.

Sir Ian played a straight bat yesterday to all the recent rumours, which have also linked

Bass to a possible bid for Ladbrokes and, most persistently, Allied Domecq's 50 per cent stake in Carlsberg Tønder, Britain's third biggest brewer after Bass and Scottish & Newcastle.

He admitted, however, that with gearing of only 23 per cent Bass had plenty of firepower. John Leach, chief executive of Brent Walker, attempted to pour cold water on the speculation, describing the write-down as a simple attempt to "paint a true and fair picture of the value of the business. There is no hidden agenda."

Bass's shares soared yesterday after first-half profits emerged right at the top end of analysts' expectations. After interim pre-tax profits came in 10 per cent higher at £289m, brokers pushed up forecasts to between £670m and £675m from previous estimates of about £655m.

After touching 800p, the shares closed at 785p, 20p up on the day, as the market also digested an 8.5 per cent rise in the half-year dividend to 7.7p.

Since the beginning of 1995,

Bass's shares have risen by more than 50 per cent, outperforming the rest of a rising stock market by 23 per cent.

Analysts were wrong-footed by a smaller-than-expected decline in the company's leisure retailing arm, which includes the Coral betting shops. At the time of Bass's annual meeting recently the company said first-quarter profits at the division were running 30 per cent lower than the previous year, thanks to the impact of the National Lottery and severe winter weather, but the decline was limited to only 17 per cent for the half year.

Brent Walker said yesterday its operating profits had fallen by 25 per cent as a result of the Lottery. It said there had been a permanent diminution in the profitability of the business. Together with a small write-down in the value of its Pubmaster pub estate, there was a £305m exceptional charge against profits, which led to a loss in 1995 of £414.5m (£142.5m loss).

Investment column, page 24

US stance over Cuba sparks trade row

DIANE COYLE
Economics Editor

One of the most serious trade rows between industrial countries of recent years erupted yesterday, pitting the United States against its main trading partners.

The dispute, over a new US law allowing it to take draconian action against foreigners doing business with Cuba, overshadowed the final day of the annual meeting of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development in Paris.

The ministerial meeting had struggled through the day to find a form of words that would affirm the industrial countries' commitment to multilateral trading rules without condemning America's unilateral action too openly.

But other countries, especially Japan, were harsh in their criticism of the blatant US disregard for the normal world trading procedures.

Sir Leon Brittan, the EU's trade commissioner, also launched an unusually forthright attack at the Paris meeting, saying the US had no right to impose its own policies on the rest of the world.

The EU lodged a formal complaint about the US action two weeks ago.

US officials had suggested that the same unilateral measures could be taken against foreign firms with investments in other "rogue" nations such as Iran and Libya.

The "Helms-Burton" act stepping up the US embargo of Cuba was passed following the shooting in February of civilian planes piloted by Cuban-Americans, killing four people.

Papering over the row exercised officials' ingenuity yesterday.

One official said: "The wording of the communiqué took a long time and was very finely crafted."

It concluded that OECD members would: "strengthen confidence in and the credibility of the multilateral trading system by avoiding taking trade and investment measures that would be in conflict with World Trade Organisation and OECD rules."

Discussions between the US and its partners about how to resolve the dispute will continue in the weeks before the next international meeting, the G7 economic summit at the end of next month.

However, the US raised the stakes by filing a separate complaint with the World Trade Organisation yesterday, alleging that some EU countries including Britain were charging excess tariffs on high-technology goods.

The clash had one favourable side-effect for the British government. Ministers were pleased that the US was forced to drop its plans for the World Trade Organisation to try to incorporate minimum social standards in trade agreements.

Along with France, the Americans had argued that the best way to prevent Third World countries from exploiting child and forced labour would be to outlaw these practices through trading rules. However, research by the OECD found no evidence that these forms of exploitation gave developing countries an unfair trade advantage.

Britain, backed by several other countries, has firmly opposed the introduction of "social clauses". Ministers saw the US proposal as a form of backdoor protectionism.

The day after Russia's surprise application to join the rich countries' club, many ministers present called for a pause in new memberships.

Hungary and the Czech Republic joined earlier this year, and Korea, Poland and Slovakia will become members within the next 12 months, taking the total to 30.

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Manchester - Manchester Business School on Wednesday 29 May at 5.30pm.

London - The Institute of Directors, 116 Pall Mall on Thursday 30 May at 6.15pm.

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STOCK MARKETS					
Index	Close	Day's change	Change (%)	1995 High	1996 Low
FTSE 100	3784.20	-25.20	-0.7	3857.10	3630.50
FTSE 250	4512.30	-16.90	-0.4	4568.80	4015.30
FTSE 350	1906.90	-11.50	-0.6	1943.40	1816.60
FT Small Cap	2239.05	-2.94	-0.1	2241.97	1854.06
FT All Share	1892.50	-10.86	-0.6	1924.17	1791.95
New York *	5727.77	-4.49	-0.1	5748.82	5092.94
Japan	21958.00	-133.74	-0.6	22282.05	19734.70
Hong Kong	11082.79	-5.99	-0.1	11584.99	10264.87
Frankfurt	2556.87	-13.91	-0.5	2570.78	2264.96

Source: FT Information

INTEREST RATES					
Short sterling	UK medium gilt	US long bond	10yr US Treasury	3m US Treasury	3m Euro
5.00	6.38	8.05	7.86	8.17	7.93
5.34	5.78	6.89	6.42	6.87	6.75
0.47	0.94	3.25	3.08	-	-
3.25	3.34	6.45	6.71	7.07	-

CURRENCIES					
£/\$	£/DM	£/¥	£/A\$	£/NZ\$	£/HK\$
1.5102	0.346	1.5751	0.6922	0.15	0.8349
1.5105	0.206	1.5738	0.6920	0.06	0.8355
2.3236	0.950	2.2665	1.5387	0.280	1.4380
161.511	70.53	137.281	108.950	70.11	87.1600
84.9	0.2	84.9	97.2	unch	90.1

OTHER INDICATORS					
Oil Brent \$	Gold \$	Gold £	RPI	12m % Chg	13 June
18.96	381.45	259.00	152.6	4.2	149.0
18.22	382.70	243.60	107.4	2.0	106.3
18.22	243.60	6.75	-	-	-

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY TOM STEVENSON

Land Securities a beached whale

Success in continuing attempts by Courtaulds to persuade suppliers to link raw material costs with selling prices would enhance the quality of earnings. Until then, after seeing margins wiped out last year in acrylics and viscose, the big question is when the

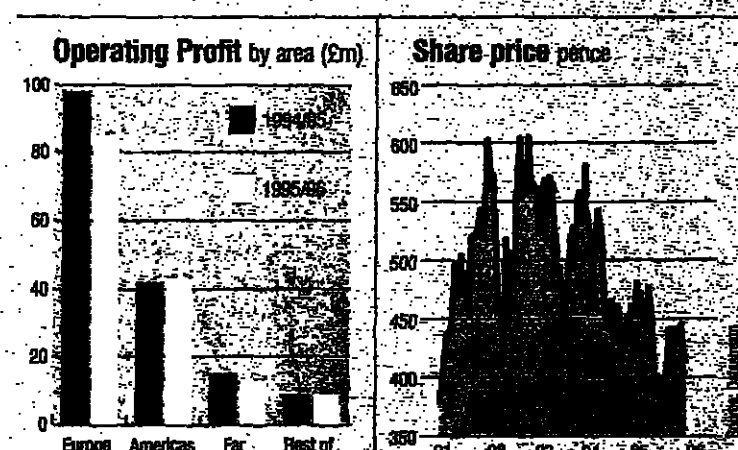
Land Securities a beached whale

LandSecs, worth more than £3bn, a quarter of the whole sector, does not have that luxury. It is so large that its

Courtaulds : at a glance

Market value: £1.71bn, share price 422p

Five-year record	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
Turnover (£m)	134	139	142	145	148
Pre-tax profits (£m)	186	188	122	151	132
Exchange per share (pence)	321	321	321	321	321
Dividends per share (pence)	13.0	14.0	14.5	15.4	15.9



Waiting for Bass to bait its hook

Bass is financially strong, has an unrivalled spread of leisure assets and throws off enough cash to fund an ambitious £600m capital expenditure program and then some. On the basis of profits this year of £667m and £745m next time, the shares at 788p, up 20p, stand at a 10 per cent premium to the market, about the same as Whitbread and Scottish & Newcastle. It is worth it. Good value.

Prepare to jockey in the executive sweepstakes

CITY DIARY

JOHN WILLCOCK



Carrot or stick? One way to incentivise

A team of Lloyd's of London executives touring California to persuade US firms to back the Lloyd's reinsurance package are refusing from a former Lloyd's agent to hundreds of investors, saying all the meetings are cancelled due to "lack of interest". John Stace, deputy chairman of Lloyd's, is leading the group in an effort to drum up support for the settlement. He has won acceptances from hundreds of US names, which is impressive considering that, until recently, outstanding court actions against Lloyd's prevented it even talking to American members. Now someone has got hold of headed note paper from the perfectly legitimate Association of Lloyd's Members, and has written to names saying all the meetings have been scrapped. Lloyd's have contacted the Californian police, who are investigating. Meanwhile Mr Stace ploughs on.

The name change - scheduled for next Monday when the pub reopens for business - is fine by Vaux, Mr Wight's son and many others but has aroused the displeasure of the town council whose new mayor, Jan Marshall, says: "There is a lot of respect for Mr Wight in Thruxton and we are anxious that no-one casts doubt on his name. We don't want the town turned into a kind of James' Land Disneyland."

Vaux spokesman Hilary Florek is unmoved: "We're talking to everyone involved to try to resolve this as soon as possible. The last thing we want is to cause a row in the town but the tenant is still keen for the name change to go ahead - and we have the new signs ready and waiting to go up."

Writs f
Oasis l
wran

CBI closes

Eddie George

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COMMENT

Circumstances change and there are often good commercial reasons why it would be unfair to hold companies to the letter of their takeover promises. Even so, the Forte camp has a right to feel aggrieved.

Granada, takeover battles, and what people say

Perhaps deservedly, what is said in bid battles often tends not to be scrutinised that closely or taken that seriously. Exaggeration and hyperbole are, after all, part of the cut and thrust of any contested takeover. None the less, advisers do have a duty of care over the claims and promises being made.

Granada yesterday gave details of the asset disposal programme promised at the time of its bid for Forte. In so doing it let drop that the Meridian hotels are no longer for sale. The question is, does this amount to a breach of promise? It was certainly implied that Meridian was part of the package of planned disposals in the final stages of the bid. That Granada can suggest one set of strategies in the heat of the battle, then calmly execute a U-turn, must be viewed as a bit rich.

It wouldn't be the first time. At the outset of the battle, in November, Granada said it would sell the trophy hotels, the Savoy, the Alpha Airports holding and, of course, the Welcome Break motorway services operation, which it couldn't have kept anyway due to competition rules. Of the rest, it would reinvestigate the roadside restaurants and improve the profitability of the remaining hotel operations.

That was the stated strategy until Granada unveiled its increased offer. Suddenly, Gerry Robinson, the chief executive, was no longer "wedded" to the Exclusive and Meridian hotels, having decided that the company couldn't improve profits enough to warrant

turning down attractive offers from other buyers. Mr Robinson even hinted he had intended all along to dump the hotels, but had worried that Forte would accuse its predator of asset-stripping. At the same time, however, the bigger disposal programme helped to reassure investors and bankers over the financial risks of the increased offer. Now, apparently, we are back to plan A, or at least a version of it.

Hardly any shareholders are uncomfortable with the latest change of heart. Most seem convinced that Granada can do enough profits to more than meet debt-servicing needs. But would Granada have got the chance to prove the point had it not suggested the sale in the heat of the battle? In other words, would Granada have won? The answer to this is probably yes, but the point can never be proved. Circumstances change and there are often good commercial reasons why it would be unfair to hold companies to the letter of what they say during the heat of battle. Even so, the Forte camp has a right to feel aggrieved.

Remember the cycle, says the Bank

What terrible spoilsports these bank supervisors are. As soon as the housing market begins to recover marginally—helped by some tremendous deals in which lenders are virtually giving away their money

for the first year or two—the Eeyores in the Bank of England's supervision department have an attack of misery about what its consequences might be.

Last year, the Bank was equally strident in warning about trouble in store on corporate lending, where margins have dropped and covenants have weakened. Misery-guts or not, banking supervisors must act like super-tanker captains, high up on the bridge scanning the radar for rocks that the crew cannot yet see over the horizon. One such distant rock could be a spot of economic trouble after a change of government. It is a fact that even a Labour Party firmly committed to low inflation may suffer a bit of interest rate volatility for a while.

As in all business cycles, juicy profits at the top increase the temptation among banks and building societies to forget the lessons of the recent past. Many banks are reporting returns on capital as high as 35 per cent across their businesses, a level which is not sustainable. What really makes the supervisors worry is that when they add up every large mortgage lender's target market share, it comes to many times 100 per cent of the market. Some of those lenders have costs so low they could wash their faces with a lending margin of 0.28 per cent, and others—mainly banks—require three times as much to break even. The worst-hit in the coming shakeout will be the highest-cost lenders that fail to reach their over-optimistic targets for market share.

Mortgage mania in 1996 could be sowing the seeds of banking industry trouble a year or two hence. There is no suggestion that any of these lenders are going to be seriously threatened by what they are doing now. But lending goes in cycles and there could be nothing worse for the housing market than to find lenders backing out because of shrinking profitability or even losses. There is a real possibility that today's cut-price mortgages will be paid for with much more expensive rates in a few years' time.

CBI stands up to be counted

An American politician once famously observed that the interesting thing about the Non Aligned Movement was precisely who it was non-aligned with. Much the same thought springs to mind whenever the Confederation of British Industry parades its non-aligned credentials as far as party politics goes.

The organisation's political neutrality was on display again yesterday as it patiently explained why it stood foursquare behind John Major on Europe even as he was threatening to tear up everything the CBI has so patiently worked for over the years with its Continental counterparts. If you accept the outgoing president Sir Bryan Nicholson's spin on events this is nothing more than a spat between club members that

has been whipped into John Major's Waterloo by hysterical headlines in the right-wing press. In contrast, his reference to the xenophobic Euro-sceptic tendency as "a plague of locusts" is, of course, a model of restraint and objectivity.

Moreover, says the CBI, it is perfectly possible for a member state to bring Brussels to a standstill in pursuit of its own legitimate interests—in this case the lifting of the beef ban—while simultaneously remaining at the heart of Europe. After all, the Italians did precisely the same thing over milk. To those with a less tutored eye than Sir Bryan and his successor, Sir Colin Marshall, it is rather harder to see how the CBI can be reconciled. For the past decade the CBI has been the voice of reason, advocating that Britain's interests can only be best served if it is at the centre of Europe, shaping policy and benefiting from the leverage and influence that comes with being part of the world's biggest trading block.

Much the same thesis was run through yesterday even as the rest of Europe was ganging up on Britain in retaliation over Britain's promise to undermine the forthcoming Inter-Governmental Conference.

The CBI, as we argued in these columns yesterday, is right to stand up and be counted against the Eurosceptics. But by then endorsing Mr Major's stand unquestionably it risks strengthening the hand of its opposition. But that, as they say, is politics.

Writs fly in Oasis legal wrangle

NIGEL COPE

The directors of the Oasis fashion chain are facing a legal wrangle after the founders of the original group issued writs against the company and its main board directors.

The writs were served against five members of the board, including brothers Michael and Maurice Bennett who run the business. Venture capital group Apax Partners is also cited.

The claims include allegations of fraud, breach of fiduciary duty and conspiracy ahead of the collapse of the original Oasis business in 1991. The papers were served on the directors as they prepared for the company's annual meeting in London yesterday morning.

The allegations are the latest in a long-running battle between the present board and Graham and Edwina Brown, a husband and wife team who formed the original business in 1973 after leaving university.

The pair threatened legal action last year when Oasis was preparing for a stock market flotation, forcing the company to include an "erratum" in its prospectus.

Speaking after a brief meeting in front of a handful of shareholders, chairman Maurice Bennett said the company and its directors would "vigorously defend" the allegations.

He added that the claims were the same as those which surfaced last year. "I don't think there is anything new in these claims. We believe there

is no case to answer." The allegations relate to the collapse of the Oasis business in 1991 three years after the Bennetts had taken a majority stake in the company. The Browns claim that the Bennetts colluded to push Pinecord, the holding company, into liquidation. Michael and Maurice Bennett later bought the company back from the liquidators for £1.6m.

Oasis has since proved a spectacular success with sales growth eclipsing most of its high street rivals.

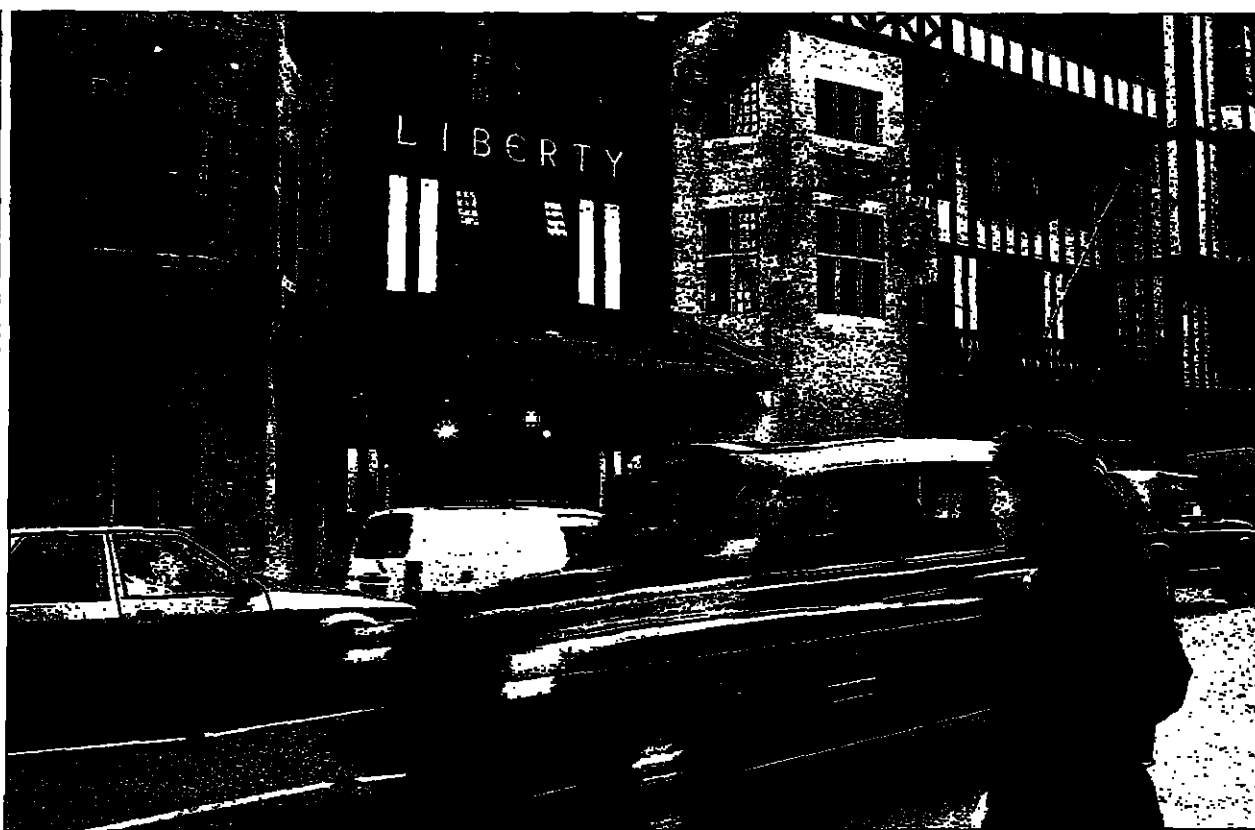
The company was floated on the stock market last year at 148p; the share price is now 420p, valuing Oasis at £220m.

Michael and Maurice Bennett sold shares worth £11m as part of the listing. Their remaining stake is worth more than £30m.

The seeds of the conflict date back to 1988 when the Bennett brothers and venture capital group Apax partners invested in Pinecord. While the Bennetts brothers were keen to expand the chain, the Browns claim they preferred a more cautious strategy with lower head office costs.

The Bennetts say the company failed due to high shop rents signed during the property boom of the 1980s.

They also say that as majority shareholders who had invested £2m in the group, they lost more through its collapse than anyone. The Bennetts later bought Oasis back from the liquidators beating off other bidders with an offer of £1.6m.



Liberty's flagship store in Regent Street survives the shake-up which will see 350 jobs go

20 branches shut in Liberty blitz

NIGEL COPE

Liberty, the upmarket retailer that is being re-structured under new management, has announced a radical shake-up of the 120-year-old group that will see 350 job losses and the closure of all 20 regional branches.

The company plans to concentrate on its flagship Regent Street store in London and the international development of the brand.

The 20 provincial stores, in cities such as Bath, Glasgow and Cambridge, will close by August at a cost of £5m.

The closures include one branch in the City of London opened only last year. The two

branches at Heathrow Airport, which are profitable, will be retained. Another Heathrow outlet will open in Terminal 2 this week and a fourth at Terminal 4 in August.

The three branches of Muji, which are operated under a joint venture with a Japanese group, are unaffected.

Commenting on the closures, new chief executive Ian Thomson said: "We want to focus on the flagship store and the international development of the Liberty brand. We are not able to replicate the atmosphere of the Regent Street store, or the range of its assortment in the regional branches."

Mr Thomson said Liberty

would expand internationally. More airport outlets are expected, though it is likely they will be larger, and city centre stores may also be opened.

The closure programme fuelled speculation yesterday that the Stewart-Liberty family, who founded the company in 1875 and still own 44 per cent of the shares, might decide to reduce their holding. The shares fell 15p to 370p.

The decision to pull out of regions such as Brighton, Bath and Glasgow is part of a strategic review of Liberty undertaken by Dennis Cassidy, who joined Liberty as chairman last year.

It follows a profits warning in

April when the company ousted its then chief executive and passed the final dividend. Liberty warned then that its pre-tax profits for the year to January would fall from last year's £3.6m to not more than £2.1m.

The board's action has the support of Bryan Myerson, the South African investor who has 17 per cent of Liberty's shares and successfully campaigned for the modernisation of the group. Many of his plans have been enacted, including the enfranchisement of non-voting shares.

Andrew Gurety has been appointed finance director. He held a similar post at Bodington, the pubs group.

IN BRIEF

• Alliance & Leicester, the UK's fourth-largest building society, yesterday is to close more than 400 of its branch agencies, traditionally linked to estate agents' shops. The society said the closures, set for the end of August, was decided because they do not have the technology needed to meet demands for new products and services it wants to launch. The 50 remaining agencies that do will be rebranded.

• Kingfisher, the Woolworths to B&Q retail group, added to high street optimism by announcing an 11 per cent rise in turnover to £1.24bn in the 13 weeks to 4 May. Like-for-like sales were up 6.4 per cent, including a strong recovery from the second half of last year at B & Q. Kingfisher's problematical DIY chain, B & Q enjoyed a 3.4 per cent uplift in underlying sales and said it took market share from rivals in February and March. There had been a revival in the DIY market since April, it added. Kingfisher also announced it was to seek a secondary listing on the Paris bourse.

• BAA and SwissAir were involved in a war of words as the bid battle for control of the Alders duty-free business resurfaced. BAA said SwissAir's £145m offer fails to take into account some of the commercial realities of the deal. SwissAir hit back saying its offer has no strings attached and trumps BAA's £130m deal which was agreed by Alders on Friday. SwissAir wants Alders to present its offer to shareholders together with the BAA deal at an emergency meeting.

• Toys 'R' Us, America's biggest toy shop chain, yesterday faced anti-trust charges after federal trade regulators voted to initiate action. The Federal Trade Commission said the group "has used its market power to keep toy prices higher". The two-year investigation by the commission has questioned executives of the company about allegations it pressured manufacturers not to sell some toys to rival retailers, especially discounters. The company, which commands a fifth of the \$19bn US toy market, said on Tuesday its buying practices were designed to protect its hefty investment in the toy industry, not to bully toy manufacturers.

• The House of Lords yesterday paved the way for an estimated \$3bn-worth of settlements in the London reinsurance market. The Law Lords upheld last October's Court of Appeal ruling on the "pay as paid" issue. This means that reinsurers will now have to pay out in full on claims from an insolvent insurer, even if the insurer has not yet paid out against claims made by its own customers. The decision on Charter Reinsurance versus Pagan will enable half a dozen similar big cases pending in the London market to be resolved.

• The Independent Television Commission yesterday invited submissions on its draft licensing conditions for the launch of digital terrestrial television in the UK. The enabling legislation for DTT is still before Parliament, but the ITC argued it needed to consult on the terms of the licences as early as possible if the service is to be up and running by 1998, as the Government hopes. The ITC, which will regulate most aspects of the new service, is to license so-called "multiplex operators", who will be free to bid for as many as 3 of six available multiplexes. Viewers will be able to receive as many as 30 channels under the scheme, but will be required to buy a set-top box. The broadcasting industry has been lukewarm about DTT's prospects, due to its high cost and high risk.

• CrestCo, the company developing an electronic settlement system for the London Stock Exchange, is on target to begin operating 15 July. The new system, which will bring paperless settlement to Europe's largest equity market, plans to begin actually settling share trades by 19 August, and to completely replace the exchange's existing Talisman settlement system by next April. Current trials involve 260 firms across the UK and Ireland.

• Capita Group, 3i and Mercury Asset Management have been put on the Government's shortlist of potential purchasers for Her Majesty's Stationery Office, the publisher of government documents, Capita said. A further announcement regarding the position of the management team and the purchase will be made if the consortium is successful in its offer.

• Williams Holdings is "encouraged" by its performance in the second quarter but warned that recent improvements in market conditions in North America will be offset by "general weakness" in continental European markets.

CBI closes ranks behind Major in EU squabble

MICHAEL HARRISON

The leadership of the CBI yesterday closed ranks behind John Major over his stance on Europe despite fears that it could rebound badly on business interests and strengthen the hand still further of Tory Euro-sceptics.

Sir Colin Marshall, in his first appearance as CBI president, said he "strongly agreed"

with the Prime Minister's policy of non-cooperation with Brussels, adding: "I would not have thought that the position the PM took is particularly going to encourage any more the efforts of the Euro-sceptics. I do not anticipate this tactic is going to have an effect on business."

He was backed by the outgoing CBI president, Sir Bryan Nicholson, who described the

stand-off between Britain and its EU partners as little more than a spat and criticised the press for whipping up hysteria with the use of emotive headlines.

"We entirely understand why he has taken the stance he has taken and the business position has to be one of sympathy," Sir Bryan said. "All clubs have spats. These things happen and an assertion of your national inter-

est within the club is quite legitimate."

He rejected suggestions that Mr Major's stance could render Britain a "semi-detached" member of the European Union or allow the Euro-sceptics to hijack policy on Europe.

But he acknowledged that the "noise and flak" in the background from anti-European wing of the Tory Party was "singularly unhelpful".

Yesterday's monthly meeting of the CBI's ruling council was told by one Japanese-owned firm that coverage of the row with Europe had prompted worried calls from Tokyo to ask whether the UK was contemplating withdrawal from the European Union.

Sir Bryan, who used his speech to the CBI's annual dinner on Tuesday night to attack the "churlish xenophobia"

of the Euro-sceptics, said the Prime Minister had been correct to draw a line in the sand over the continuing beef ban.

Both he and Sir Colin insisted that the pursuit of national interests by individual members states was legitimate and not inconsistent with a desire to remain in the mainstream of Europe. The CBI said that it stood foursquare behind Mr Major.

The economy was on course to meet the inflation target and the reductions in interest rates in recent months had been fully justified

Kenneth Clarke

The downside risk had not yet materialised and the probability of stronger growth later in the year and into next was quite high

Eddie George

Clarke ready to raise rates but sees no need

DIANE COYLE
Economics Editor

Kenneth Clarke said for the second month running that he was prepared to raise interest rates if the economy started to expand too fast. However, minutes of his April meeting with Eddie George, Governor of the Bank of England, showed that the Chancellor thought there was no danger of having to do so soon.

The minutes reported the Chancellor saying: "He would be prepared to raise interest rates if the economy did begin to grow unsustainably fast but noted that there were presently no signs of this."

Growth was below trend and inflationary pressures remained very subdued, he added. However, the Chancellor insisted

that growth could reach 3 per cent this year.

Geoff Dicks, an economist at NatWest Markets, said: "So long as the Chancellor continues to hold that view his scope for any rate cuts is curtailed, if not completely eliminated."

Mr Clarke's optimism fits in the face of a cut in the internal Treasury growth forecast below 3 per cent, reported in the *Independent* recently.

The Bank of England has subsequently warned that interest rates might need to rise if the Government wants to hit its inflation target in 1998.

In its Inflation Report earlier this month it predicted inflation was "marginally" more likely than not to be above 2.5 per cent by then.

Mr George and Mr Clarke agreed to leave rates unchanged

in April, the month after a third cut in the cost of borrowing. Mr George said the pause in manufacturing could last some time but growth would probably be stronger later in the year.

The Governor yesterday acknowledged the success of the framework for setting monetary policy. In a foreword to the Bank's annual report he said the delayed publication of monthly meetings with the Chancellor of the Exchequer had made the debate more open.

Too much attention had been paid to the "technical" disagreements with the Chancellor, he wrote.

Mr George's own £3,008 pay rise to £232,423 in the year to February represented a modest 1.3 per cent, well within the 2.4 per cent inflation rate.

Norton men convicted of fraud

A two-year investigation into the affairs of Norton, the motorcycle group, involving the Serious Fraud Office culminated yesterday in two men being convicted on fraud charges, writes Magnus Grimond.

Simon Fussell, chairman of Minity, a furniture group, and Rudolph De Mendonca, a former stockbroker with the firm of Whitefairs, were found guilty at Southwark Crown Court of conspiring to defraud Priest Mariani Holdings. De Mendonca was also convicted of two forgery offences.

The charges involved a £1m fraud and related to the sale of Exide House, in London's Shaftesbury Avenue in 1989. Russell disguised the profit he was making on the sale by creating a fictitious individual, "Katie Chahs", said to be of Iranian origin.

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Pick 'n' mixing offers a solution to jobless crisis

High unemployment can be solved, and it is clear what form the solutions have to take. But this dramatic conclusion of the two-year Jobs Study conducted by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, and presented to ministers in Paris this week, is not necessarily good news for politicians grappling with the problem.

For it is a bitter medicine. The solutions the OECD's experts have identified require many European governments to accept that in a changed world they cannot continue to run their economies in the way they have for the past 50 years.

In other countries such as the US and UK they require acceptance that fiercely contested policies which have removed traditional union, workplace and social security rights have nevertheless created more jobs.

During the past two years it is clear that the governments of almost all industrial countries have come to accept, to some extent, the diagnosis presented in the OECD's exhaustive research.

Briefly, it is that almost all the unemployment in the industrial world has structural causes, as the chart (top right) demonstrates.

Boosting the economy through the traditional methods of lower taxes or lower interest rates would make some difference to the jobs total but not much. Structural unemployment has ratcheted up due to the effect of existing industrial relations practices and benefit structures in a world economy that has suffered a series of shocks ranging from higher oil prices in the 1970s to the introduction of new information technologies.

By and large, most governments accept the validity of this view - even



ECONOMIC VIEW DIANE COYLE

those, like the Germans, who earlier resisted it.

At the OECD meeting this week Lorenz Schomus, a German economy minister, said: "Since all the studies considered reliable demonstrate that Europe's growth and employment problems are largely of a structural nature, our policy response must take the form of measures to improve these structures."

The recent programmes announced by the German government take this as their point of departure, he added.

It was hard to find a minister at the annual Paris get-together who

disagreed. However, you only have to read reports of new strikes in Germany this week to see the stumbling block. Governments might have reached a consensus but they have not marketed it to their electorates. Who can blame them? Although Margaret Thatcher won re-election in 1993 and 1997, she was one of the most hated of British politicians because of her determination to destroy union influence and deregulate the economy. It was a divisive strategy that will not play well in other countries.

It is clear that many Continental politicians see their task as choosing

the best point on a trade-off between unemployment and inequality, a trade-off that has pushed Britain and the US towards the low unemployment, high inequality end, and countries like Sweden and France to the other extreme.

Earnings inequality has risen faster in Britain, the United States, and New Zealand - the three countries most praised by the OECD for their labour market flexibility - than elsewhere in the industrialised world. Other countries would like to move a bit further towards the British end but are not prepared to go all the way.

The British government argues passionately, privately supported by OECD economists, that the nation you can have either flexibility or fairness, but not both, is bogus.

Angela Knight, economic secretary to the Treasury, stressed that unemployment was the biggest source of inequality.

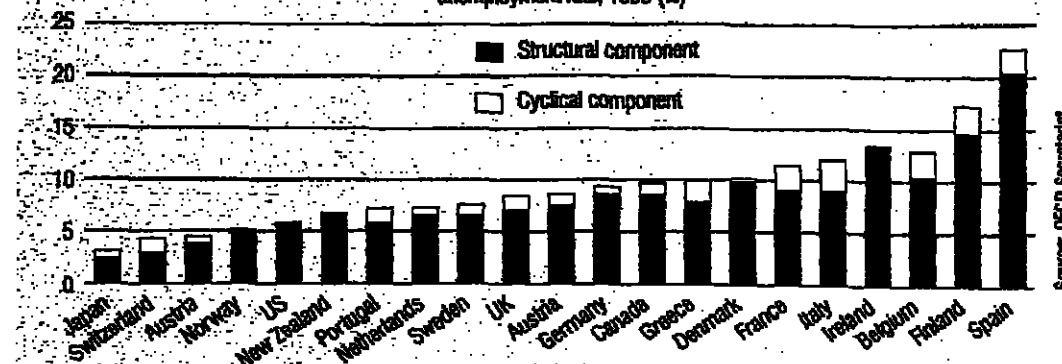
"Clearly the most effective way to tackle what is called social exclusion is to create jobs," she said. But she agreed that the message of fairness through flexibility, as opposed to fairness versus flexibility, had not yet been widely accepted.

It is not an easy message to sell at a time when growth has slowed in Europe and unemployment is rising. Any attempt to tackle the economic structures that underlie high joblessness will bring governments into a head-on clash with vested interests, including the unions whose role is threatened by industrial decline and job flexibility, at a time when the public has a low opinion of economic policies, anyway.

Some OECD governments are not happy about the organisation's direct criticism of their current anti-

Structural and cyclical unemployment

unemployment rate, 1995 (%)



unemployment strategies. For example, this week the OECD made public its objections to some members' training or public sector work schemes, which it argues merely qualify the jobless for another subsequent spell of unemployment.

Yet it looks inevitable that many will follow at least some of the organisation's advice. Although most Continental governments remain attached to some of the things swept away in Britain during the Thatcher years - whether minimum wage, collective bargaining or high unemployment benefit levels - they are likely to adopt a pick 'n' mix of policies from the organisation's list (see box, left).

Will the OECD see member countries adopt the radical programme of reform it thinks will be necessary to make a big impact on the unemployment numbers? Definitely not at a time when headlines across the industrial world shout of more job losses, and we have been told by an influential Wall Street guru

that "downsizing" is bad for the economy.

The gap between public opinion and the OECD view of the way the jobs market works is clearly huge. Britain would like to see the think-tank spread the gospel by publishing some detailed research into the numbers, much as the Council of Economic Advisers did recently for the US.

Exactly which jobs have gone and which have been created? How much do the new jobs pay compared to the old ones? How mobile are people between jobs and how do their earnings vary over their career?

In the US, the CEA found that two-thirds of the net 8 million jobs created since 1992 paid higher than median earnings. Evidence like this could perhaps provide the kind of proof that will be needed to swing public opinion.

Early research due to be published soon by the OECD suggests that there has been no trend towards greater downsizing during the past

two business cycles, except perhaps slightly in the US. Elsewhere, job destruction and creation have varied during the cycle but stayed unchanged on average.

However, the terms of new jobs have changed, with more short-term contracts or part-time work, for instance. In addition, young people are more affected by downsizing than other groups, forming a bigger chunk of the group of labour market "outsiders".

There has always been a split between those who have full-time, permanent jobs on good terms and the rest, but the split is becoming wider.

Having an unsatisfactory job might be better for your income and well-being than being unemployed but it will not disguise the fact that your position relative to other people with other jobs has deteriorated. This goes a long way towards explaining why the message of flexibility has made little impression on public opinion.

Foreign Exchange Rates

Country	Spot	1 month	3 months	6 months	1 year
US	150.2	9.7	25.22	10.00	—
Canada	20.79	11.3	50.37	13.72	—
Germany	23.52	53.46	139.49	15.37	—
France	23.74	52.30	139.45	15.26	—
Italy	23.52	75.30	221.46	15.50	—
Japan	161.1	75.70	225.26	16.85	—
ECU	12.26	5.1	45.40	12.23	—
Belgium	47.25	12.3	34.29	16.49	—
Denmark	67.94	75.33	225.43	16.49	—
Netherlands	23.52	53.46	139.49	15.37	—
Spain	161.1	75.70	225.26	16.85	—
Sweden	13.02	9.5	23.34	16.23	—
Switzerland	15.11	66.39	186.14	12.55	—
Australia	130.02	22.2	67.35	12.51	—
Hong Kong	161.1	75.70	225.26	16.85	—
Malaysia	3.783	0.0	0.0	2.493	—
New Zealand	2.273	43.57	133.15	14.84	—
Saudi Arabia	5.936	0.0	0.0	3.7504	—
Singapore	2.271	0.0	0.0	1.405	—

Other Spot Rates

Country	Spot	1 month	3 months	6 months	1 year
Argentina	150.2	9.7	25.22	10.00	—
Australia	130.02	22.2	67.35	12.51	—
Brazil	150.2	9.7	25.22	10.00	—
Canada	20.79	11.3	50.37	13.72	—
Chile	150.2	9.7	25.22	10.00	—
Colombia	150.2	9.7	25.22	10.00	—
Czech	150.2	9.7	25.22	10.00	—
Denmark	67.94	75.33	225.43	16.49	—
Egypt	150.2	9.7	25.22	10.00	—
Finland	150.2	9.7	25.22	10.00	—
Ghana	150.2	9.7	25.22	10.00	—
Greece	150.2	9.7	25.22	10.00	—
India	150.2	9.7	25.22	10.00	—
Indonesia	150.2	9.7	25.22	10.00	—
Israel	150.2	9.7	25.22	10.00	—
Italy	23.52	53.46	139.49	15.37	—
Japan	161.1	75.70	225.26	16.85	—
Korea	150.2	9.7	25.22	10.00	—
Malaysia	3.783	0.0	0.0	2.493	—
Mexico	150.2	9.7	25.22	10.00	—
Netherlands	23.52	53.46	139.49	15.37	—
New Zealand	2.273	43.57	133.15	14.84	—
Philippines	150.2	9.7	25.22	10.00	—
Poland	150.2	9.7	25.22	10.00	—
Portugal	150.2	9.7	25.22	10.00	—
Romania	150.2	9.7	25.22	10.00	—
Russia	150.2	9.7	25.22	10.00	—
South Africa	150.2	9.7	25.22	10.00	—
South Korea	150.2	9.7	25.22	10.00	—
Spain	161.1	75.70	225.26	16.85	—
Sweden	13.02	9.5	23.34	16.23	—
Switzerland	15.11	66.39	186.14	12.55	—
Taiwan	150.2	9.7	25.22	10.00	—
Thailand	150.2	9.7	25.22	10.00	—
Turkey	150.2	9.7	25.22	10.00	—
USA	150.2	9.7	25.22	10.00	—
UK	150.2	9.7	25.22	10.00	—
Yugoslavia	150.2	9.7	25.22	10.00	—

Forward rates quoted high to low at a discount; subtract from spot rate to add to spot rate.

*Dollar rates quoted as reciprocals.

For the latest forward exchange rates call 0800 123 3033.

Cable cost 50p per minute (except rates) 43p other times.

Interest Rates

Country	Rate	Country	Rate	Country	Rate
UK	6.00%	Germany	2.50%	US	8.75%
France	5.75%	Italy	4.50%	Japan	5.50%
Spain	5.00%	Belgium	2.50%	Canada	5.25%
Netherlands	2.50%	Denmark	5.00%	Sweden	5.00%
Switzerland	2.50%	Portugal	8.00%	South Korea	8.00%

Bond Yields

Country	Yield	Country	Yield	Country	Yield
UK	8.75%	Germany	5.25%	US	8.75%
France	5.75%	Italy	4.50%	Japan	5.50%
Spain	5.00%	Belgium	2.50%	Canada	5.25%
Netherlands	2.50%	Denmark	5.00%	Sweden	5.00%
Switzerland	2.50%	Portugal	8.00%	South Korea	8.00%

Money Market Rates

Country	Rate	Country	Rate	Country	Rate
UK	6.00%	Germany	2.50%	US	8.75%
France	5.75%	Italy	4.50%	Japan	5.50%
Spain	5.00%	Belgium	2.50%	Canada	5.25%
Netherlands	2.50%	Denmark	5.00%	Sweden	5.00%
Switzerland	2.50%	Portugal	8.00%	South Korea	8.00%

Tourist Rates

Country	Rate	Country	Rate	Country	Rate
UK	6.00%	Germany	2.50%	US	8.75%
France	5.75%	Italy	4.50%	Japan	5.50%
Spain	5.00%	Belgium	2.50%	Canada	5.25%
Netherlands	2.50%	Denmark	5.00%	Sweden	5.00%
Switzerland	2.50%	Portugal	8.00%	South Korea	8.00%

Liffe Financial Futures

Contract	Settlement	High/Low	Open	Close
Long Oil	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00
Short Oil	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00
Long Gold	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00
Short Gold	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00

Energy

Contract	Settlement	High/Low	Open	Close
Long Oil	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00
Short Oil	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00
Long Gold	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00
Short Gold	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00

Commodity Indices

Index	Value	Index	Value	Index	Value
US	10.00	UK	10.00	Japan	10.00
France	10.00	Italy	10.00	Germany	10.00
Spain	10.00	Belgium	10.00	Canada	10.00
Netherlands	10.00	Denmark	10.00	Sweden	10.00

Industrial Metals

Contract	Settlement	High/Low	Open	Close
Long Oil	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00
Short Oil	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00
Long Gold	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00
Short Gold	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00

Precious Metals

Contract	Settlement	High/Low	Open	Close
Long Oil	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00
Short Oil	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00
Long Gold	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00
Short Gold	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00

Agricultural

Contract	Settlement	High/Low	Open	Close
Long Oil	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00
Short Oil	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00
Long Gold	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00
Short Gold	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00

Other Softs

Contract	Settlement	High/Low	Open	Close
Long Oil	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00
Short Oil	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00
Long Gold	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00
Short Gold	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00

Latest Unit Trust Prices

Latest Cash Trust Prices															
Stock	Sell	Buy	Yld	Stock	Sell	Buy	Yld	Stock	Sell	Buy	Yld	Stock	Sell	Buy	Yld
Asia Equity & Low Vol. Portfolio Asia Equity & Low Vol.															

sport

Baulch joins one-lap race for Atlanta

Mike Rowbottom meets the Welsh 400m runner behind the peroxide blond dreadlocks

It is not easy to miss Jamie Baulch. Peroxide dreadlocks give him a unique image in British athletics, and his eccentric tonsorial taste is about to be highlighted in a promotional campaign by Vidal Sassoon.

Having decided upon an Olympic theme, the company used Baulch and his Welsh team-mate, Paul Gray, as models for posters which will soon be on display throughout the country. But Baulch, who will start his international season on home ground this Saturday in the Welsh Games at Cardiff, is rapidly establishing himself as an athlete outstanding for performance as much as appearance. And he, too, has decided upon an Olympic theme this summer as he strives for a 400 metres place in Atlanta.

British competition in this event has never been stronger, with established figures such as Roger Black, Du'Aine Ladejo, Mark Richardson and the United Kingdom record holder David Grindley, who is training well after long term injury, facing a challenge from younger talents such as Mark Hylton, Guy Bullock and the Welsh pair of Baulch and Iwan Thomas.

But Baulch, who won a world junior sprint relay gold medal with Britain in 1992 and was named in yesterday's 400m relay squad for the European Cup on 1-2 June, is confident that he can be a serious contender. So is his coach, Britain's world 110m hurdles record holder Colin Jackson.

Since joining Jackson's training group in the autumn of 1994, this likeable 23-year-old has reduced his 400m best to 45.1sec. And after three months of uninterrupted winter work in Australia, he and his coach are convinced that the Welsh record of 44.66, which Thomas set at altitude last month, is within range.

Performing to that kind of level at next month's Olympic trials would set up a fascinating conflict and Jackson has clearly been working hard to get his protégé into the right frame of mind for the challenge.

After last Saturday's meeting at Bedford, where Baulch broke 21 seconds for 200m despite wet and windy conditions, he was jocularly but insistently reminded by Jackson of the need to concentrate on every round of racing in Birmingham next month. "Jamie is going to surprise a few people there," Jackson said.

A year and a half ago it was Baulch who was registering surprise - at least - as he took up Jackson's invitation at the 1994 Commonwealth Games to train abroad with himself, Gray and the high hurdler Samantha Parquharson - Team Wales.

"It did shock me at first," Baulch said. "I went from training twice a week to six days a week, and I started doing weights as well. I was really dying at first, but this winter I didn't miss a day."

"Three months in Australia. Who else in Britain could have offered me the opportunity to do that? Colin likes being a slave driver, but it has been absolutely brilliant for my career and one day I hope to repay him."

Baulch gave a firm indication of his potential at Cathead last summer when, in only his second 400m of the season, he beat Black, recording 45.15. "I consider Roger the best 400m runner in the country, because of his consistency," Baulch said. "I remember thinking afterwards, 'If I can beat Roger, I can beat anyone.'"

The confidence he feels comes partly from the higher expectations among those he now trains with. "The attitude rubs off," he said. It is also grounded in the support of his adoptive parents, Marilyn and Alan, who have looked after him since he was five months old.

After being tripped in the 400m final of the 1994 European indoor championships, he recalls walking away with knees and elbows bloodied, and feeling tears well up when he heard condolences being offered. "One day," he thought, "I'm going to show them." That day could be close.



Jamie Baulch competes in the Welsh Games on Saturday

Photograph: Mark Shearman

Sand-trap tantrum blows Monty's cool to four winds

The most pampered individuals in sport are golfing superstars. They are coddled, waited on, provided for and fawned over from the first day they break through as exceptional practitioners.

Normally, the biggest decision they have to make off the course is between oysters and smoked salmon as a starter. They live in stockbroker belts, travel first class, stay at five-star hotels and work frequently in sylvan retreats referred to commonly as millionaires' playgrounds.

There are no busted ankles, lacerated knuckles or ripped cartilages. Trauma is knee-high rough, a downhill putt, a ball plugged in sand, two over par.

Successful golfers go through life with a factor-30 tan, wearing designer clothes picked for them and laid out by style co-ordinators. The pay for simply showing up is often three times what the average wage earner takes home annually. No exact figures are to hand, but show me an outstanding player who is not sitting on a multiple of seven figures and I will show you one who should think seriously about changing his agent.

The fruits of dedication in golf are not begrudged here but pressures of attainment are no excuse for the petulance displayed by Colin Montgomerie last week when his game came apart in a high wind during the final round of the Benson and Hedges International Open.

Finding his ball plugged in a bunker, and by then tumbling down the leaderboard, Montgomerie kicked twice into the sand, incurring a two-shot penalty on the amusing grounds that he had "tested a hazard". This was a cop-out on the part of the authorities, fooling nobody I have since spoken to about the incident.

Next day at the ancient golf club in Kent that agreed curiously to have me as a member, the word "pathetic" was used generally to describe Montgomerie's behaviour. Everyone agreed that it was no sort of example to set aspiring professionals.

Whether Montgomerie's excellence in golf is the result of falling out of bed with a graceful swing or hours of unrelenting effort is irrelevant. Either way

it does not entitle him to carry on in the manner of a child who has just been told that there are no more sweets.

Afterwards, it appears, Montgomerie reacted grumpily under interrogation. "Who is Nick Faldo?" he snapped when informed that the Masters champion considered conditions on the day unplayable.

And that is another thing. If Faldo thought the task so tough, how did Stephen Ames manage a level-par 72, to win by a stroke from Jon Robson whose sunny disposition was in marked contrast to Montgomerie's scowling countenance?

By all accounts, Faldo gave up philosophically after concluding that he was not getting anywhere. This was better than throwing a tantrum but of no consolation to spectators who were getting their first glimpse of him live since that great victory last month in Augusta.

It is a matter of individual opinion whether fame puts golfers under obligation to always put in a maximum effort. I would not hazard a guess as to what goes on in their minds but an unavoidable impression is that a number of them today are spoiled rotten.

This column rarely goes off in another direction, but an exception can be made in the case of a television programme put out by BBC 2 last Sunday night to coincide approximately with George Best's 50th birthday.

What I have in mind was the irritating interruption of a phoney debate over a team Best had put together flimsily from notable contemporaries and today's luminaries, players who would not have gelled even with liberal applications of superglue.

Supposed to be taking place in a public house it developed predictably into a load of smart-arsed tosh typical of what now often passes for an understanding of football. "Why did Besty [note the pathetic familiarity] pick him? Because he'd be first to the bar afterwards." That sort of thing.

None of the faces were familiar to me but I am told some represent that odd phenomenon, alternative humour. The late and much-lamented Les Dawson had a good definition of the genre. He considered it the opposite of funny.



KEN JONES

HOW TO PLAY

The Independent European Championship Football Forecast offers you the opportunity to use your footballing skill and judgement to answer the 11 questions printed below.

Make your selections from the answer panel below. For every correct answer you will earn the number of points attributed to that question. The individual with the highest number of points will win our prize, a VIP trip to see Milan in an important home match next season.

Details of how to enter are given opposite. You can enter at any point up until 12:00 noon on Saturday 3 June 1996, the first day of Euro '96.

HOW TO SCORE

Each of the 11 questions has a points value. If you answer any of the questions correctly you will earn the points attributed to that question. In addition to the 11 main questions you will be required to answer a tie-break question. This question does not have a points value and will only come into play should the necessity arise. The winner will be the individual who earns the most points in the competition.

QUESTIONS

All questions related to goals scored do not include goals scored in penalty shoot-outs.

1. Which striker from the list below will score the most goals in Euro '96? **14**
2. Which striker from the list below will score the fewest goals in Euro '96? **13**
3. Which goalkeeper from the list below will concede the least goals in Euro '96? **11**
4. Which goalkeeper from the list below will concede the most goals in Euro '96? **10**
5. How many goals will be scored in total in Group C, (Czech Rep., Germany, Italy, Russia)? **15**
6. How many goals will there be in the England v Switzerland game? **5**
7. How many goals will there be in the Turkey v Croatia game? **7**
8. How many goals will there be in the Netherlands v England game? **6**
9. How many yellow cards will be issued in the quarter-finals? **9**
10. How many substitutions will there be in the Wembley semi-final? **8**
11. How many shots on target will there be in the Netherlands v Scotland game, (figures based on ITV statistics)? **12**

The Break: How many goals will be scored in open play in Euro '96?

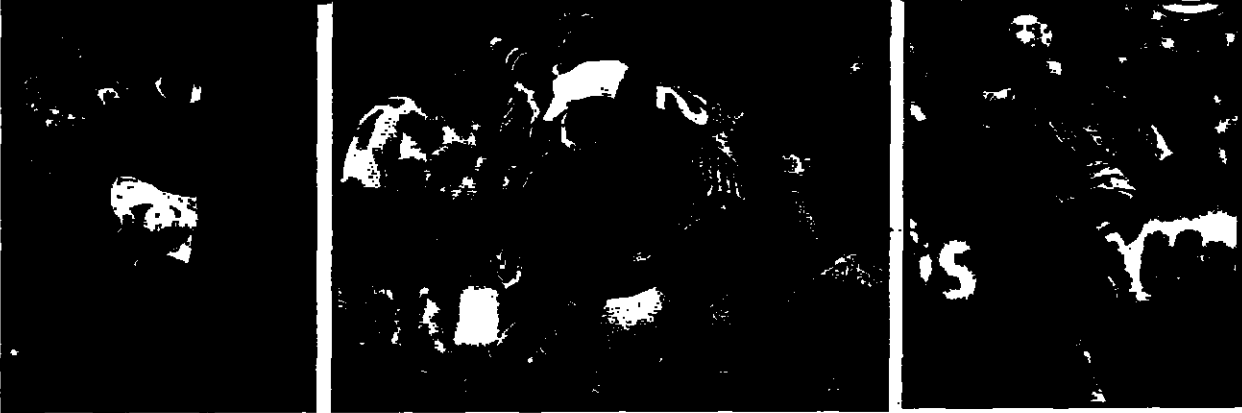
world, stay for two nights in one of the city's finest hotels and watch Milan take on another European giant in an important home game, whilst enjoying VIP hospitality courtesy of Vauxhall the sister company of Opel, Milan's club sponsors.

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EURO 96

Play THE INDEPENDENT european championship football forecast



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England hasn't seen anything like it since 1966. Next month's European Championship will be the biggest sporting event staged on these shores since Bobby Moore's side beat Germany 4-2 in the legendary World Cup final 30 years ago.

No one knows whether Terry Venables' team can emulate history, but the drama and suspense of Euro '96 will captivate the nation. Four years ago Denmark stunned the international football community by winning the European Championship in Sweden. Can they do it again? Will Jurgen Klinsmann lead

Germany to victory? Can Paolo Maldini and his team erase the memory of Italy's 1994 World Cup final defeat? Will Alan Shearer prove he's England's most feared striker?

All questions will be answered at the Wembley final on June 30th. Meanwhile, our appetites already whetted by the presence in English clubs of leading Europeans (France's Eric Cantona and Holland's Ruud Gullit), we can expect a feast of football.

The opening game - England vs Switzerland at Wembley is on 8 June. Two days later Scotland play the Netherlands at Villa Park.

The 16 competing countries are divided into four groups, with the leading two from each section going forward to the quarter-finals. From then on it's sudden death.

In this sporting spirit The Independent and the Independent on Sunday invite you to test your footballing knowledge. Play our Euro '96 competition and you can put your footballing expertise against other readers and a selection of celebrities.

Ultimately you have the chance of winning our prize: a VIP trip to watch Milan play an important home match next season.

HOW TO ENTER

- Study the 11 questions opposite carefully.
- Using your knowledge of football, choose an answer for each question from the answer list below.
- Make a note of your answer to each question together with each answer's three-digit code (to the left of the answer).
- You will use the three digit answer code to input your answer for each question into our computer telephone entry system.
- You will also be asked on our entry line to tell us verbally the total number of goals you believe will be scored in open play (not including penalty shoot-outs) throughout Euro '96. Make a note of your verbal answer before you call. There is no code for this question.
- Once you have selected your 11 answers you will have a list of 11, three-digit answer codes plus your figure of total goals scored in Euro '96. Now dial our entry line.
- If you have a Pulse phone, one which makes clicking noises when you dial, then dial 0891 363 392. If you have a Tone Phone, one which makes tone noises when you dial, simply dial 0891 363 391.
- By following the instructions given on the line carefully and double checking the selection

is correct before you dial, your entry into the game will be quick and easy.

- Enter your 11 answer codes in order when asked on line using your telephone dial / keypad. You will then be asked to state your total goals scored in open play (not including penalty shoot-outs) during Euro '96 before you leave your own details. You will then receive your unique PIN number which is the only valid proof of entry. Have a pen handy to note this down.
- If you do not receive a PIN then your selection has not been registered.
- The lines are open 24 hours a day until noon on Saturday 3 June 1996. You may enter as many times as you wish and you will receive a different PIN for each entry.
- In the event of a tie between entrants, scored on the basis of the 11 answers given, the total number of goals scored in Euro '96 - as selected by each entrant - shall be taken into account. The entrant giving a figure nearest to the actual total number of goals scored in Euro '96 will be the winner.
- In the event of a further tie, a Euro '96 football quiz will be set by The Independent Sports Editor to decide the winner.
- Sorry, not available in the Republic of Ireland.

RULES

- All telephone calls are charged at 39p per minute cheap rate and 49p per minute at all other times. Max call duration 8 mins. Entries made by pay phone must be made using a normal telephone.
- Competition only open to those dialling from the UK using the official Independent telephone entry line. Answer selections, once made, cannot be altered.
- Newspaper Publishing Plc reserves the right to stop the game at any time and change the conditions.
- Inadmissible, incomplete or incorrect selections will not be accepted.
- Sorry, not available in the Republic of Ireland.
- Newspaper Publishing Plc are not responsible for any entries lost or delayed in transfer.
- Using Newspaper Publishing rules apply. Editor's decision is final in all matters relating to the game.
- No correspondence, in writing or by telephone, will be entered into.
- Proof of magnetic transcript will not be accepted as proof of entry.
- Employees of Newspaper Publishing, Mirror Group, TDM Ltd, Europrint Group, agents and families are not allowed to enter.
- Closing date of the competition is midday Saturday 8th June 1996.

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CRS

In the meanwhile the protagonists can only wait for tomorrow – but not hope, since every time there has been optimism it has gone unrequited. England, or rather English rugby as represented by the RFU, faces meltdown. For New England, on the other hand, the rest of the world awaits.

"Game-wise, it was not one of the highlights of my career, but it was good to get it over with and put it behind and move on," she said. "It was a step forward again. One of the reasons I wanted to play here is to go through things I have to at the French."

The sport went back to court today in Australia with the opening of Super League's appeal against the ruling banning it from kicking off there before the year 2000. Seven days have been set aside for the hearing in the federal court in Sydney, with Super League's lawyers arguing 62 points of law from the original marathon court case.

If Rupert Murdoch's organisation loses again, his only remaining option would be to seek a hearing before Australia's high court, although speculation is strong that he would instead cut his losses and concentrate on his rugby union investments.

Baseball

AMERICAN LEAGUE: Seattle 13 Boston 7; Cleveland 6 Milwaukee 5; Kansas City 7 Detroit 1; California 5 Baltimore 2; New York Yankees 7 Oakland 3; Chicago White Sox 2 Toronto 1; Minnesota 4 Texas 3.

NATIONAL LEAGUE: San Francisco 8 Montreal 5; Florida 3 Cincinnati 2; Chicago Cubs 4 Arizona 2; St. Louis 8 Houston 2; Colorado 12 Pittsburgh 1.

Baseball

AMERICAN LEAGUE: Seattle 13 Boston 7; Cleveland 6 Milwaukee 5; Kansas City 7 Detroit 1; California 5 Baltimore 2; New York Yankees 7 Oakland 3; Chicago White Sox 2 Toronto 1; Minnesota 4 Texas 3.

NATIONAL LEAGUE: San Francisco 8 Montreal 5; Florida 3 Cincinnati 2; Chicago Cubs 4 Arizona 2; St. Louis 8 Houston 2; Colorado 12 Pittsburgh 1.

[illegible]

Golf

CLUB SENIOR PROFESSIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP
(Wilderness, Savannah) Leaving seeded-round geonac: 140 T Horton (Royal Jersey) 71 69. 141 H Fleeman (Romford) 69 72. 142 T Sauters (Bloxton) 72 70. 144 B Waters (Notre) 72 72. 145 J Hudson (Benton Hall) 70 75. P Lohrner (Dunmurry) 70 75. J Rhodes (South Salford) 69 76. 146 A Beckender (Marsden) 72 74. T Battr (Broome Park) 70 76. 147 B Hunt (Foskell) 72 75. 148

NUMBER GRAND TOURNAMENT (Tokyo) 11th
 1st of 15: Asanokawa (won 8, lost 3) vs Ogino
 (6-5); Kyokudokan (7-4) vs Oishi (5-3);
 Sugawara (2-6) vs Onogawa (4-7); Shidehara
 (5-3) vs Mitokuwa (7-4); Higurohara (5-6) vs Ito
 (5-6); Wakatsukyo (2-9) vs Hamanoashime
 (6-1); Konomori (8-3) vs Aoyama (5-5); Tachi-
 miya (7-4) vs Naitoboppo (4-7); Tamaoka
 (4) vs Gensyu (4-7); Kotomizumura (5-6) vs
 Inosho (4-7); Naminohara (4-7) vs Kenko (4-)

Football
INTERNATIONAL FRIENDLY
China v England (12.45pm BST) —————
(at Workers' Stadium, Peking)

Speedway
PREMIER LEAGUE: Sheffield v Long Eaton (7.45L)
SPEEDWAY STAR CUP (7.30) First round semi-
final: Middlesbrough v Hull. Second round semi-
final: Ipswich v Wolverhampton; London v
Reading.

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250

The cost to Ajax fans, in guilders (£1.00), of having their ashes sprinkled over the Amsterdam club's hallowed turf. A Dutch crematorium is buying some of the pitch to transplant in their cemetery before the stadium is demolished. They will also offer memorial plaques in red and white, Ajax's colours.

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